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VOLUME 2
ISSUE 12

PlayStation

Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine

TSUNEO SANDA

Final Fantasy VIII

Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine Issue 24 (September 1999)

September 1999
$7.99 U.S. /$9.99 Canada

09>

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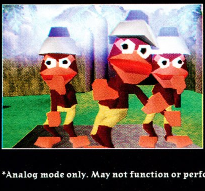
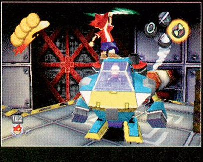
"Get some today"
EVERYONE
E
CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB
Requires Dual Shock™ analog controller.*



It's ape anarchy and it's up to you to stop their banana-fueled mayhem. You'll hunt down over 200 unruly apes, you'll drive a Tank, steer a Remote Control Car, you'll even launch an aerial attack in a propeller-powered Skyflyer. You'll use plenty of anti-ape devices, like a primate-punishing Stun Club, a simian Slingshot and Monkey Radar. Plus, it's the first and only 3D game that fully utilizes the **Dual Shock™ analog controller**. Prepare yourself, things are about to get hairy.

***Analog mode only. May not function or performance may vary with other controllers.** PlayStation and the PlayStation logos are registered trademarks of Sony Computer

RENTAL
LEASING



APE ESCAPE™

You better get them before they get you.

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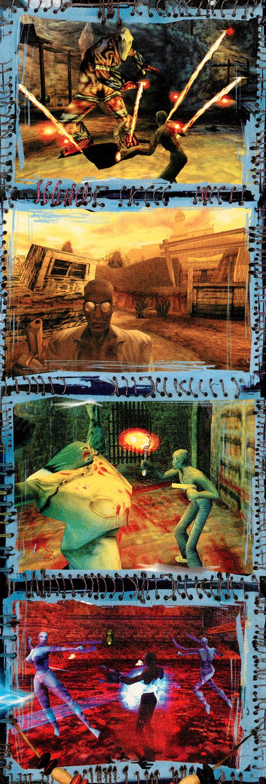
He is coming.
Walking between worlds...
Traveling the road of souls from Liveside to Deadside
And back again.
A dead man is coming, skull in one hand,
flambeau in the other...
a voodoo mask in his chest
and lines of power in his back.

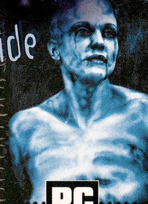
A possessed man is coming,
stalking evil in tenements and deserts,
subways and swamps,
spirit world and real world.

Shadowman is coming...
To stop the Apocalypse.
To save your soul.



SHADOW MAN™

Walk on the Deadside



Warning:
This game
is recommended for
mature audiences only.
It contains adult content.

MATURE M CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

NINTENDO 64

PC CD-ROM

PlayStation

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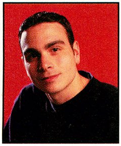
Editorial

A few unofficial words from the official editor-in-chief



Right now, Kraig is considering the use of their company intern to personally fix all of the rosters on his football games.

Casualties of War

I have always thought that in almost every way, competition is always good for the consumer. But now that it's almost one of my favorite times of the year—the start of the football season—it's become clear that this isn't always the case.

The competition for your football videogaming dollar has reached a boiling point. As you'll see in our feature in this issue, 989 Sports and EA Sports are pulling out every stop to make sure they have the best-selling football game every year. Now, this has definitely benefited us because it has led to the creation of two outstanding football games. Two games that I'm sure would be nowhere near as good as they are now if the developers weren't looking over their shoulders at one another. Unfortunately, one of the things that greatly impacts the initial sales of these two football titles is that the one that arrives in stores first gains a substantial advantage over the other—even if it's only by a day.

Because of this, EA and 989 Sports have constantly released Madden and GameDay earlier and earlier every year. In fact, it's looking like both football games will be in stores by mid-August—way before NFL rosters are even near being set. And if you think that's bad, consider that the game is finalized weeks before you ever see it in the stores. I know for a fact that Madden 2000 was finished in late July, a week before the first NFL training camp started mixing "protein" drinks, and GameDay wasn't far behind.

Mission Statement

The Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine is the only Sony Computer Entertainment America-licensed magazine and is published by ZD Inc. through an exclusive arrangement. As such, *OPM* remains independent from SCEA, and is a critical, autonomous voice that helps readers get more out of their PlayStation system by delivering the most current, comprehensive and candid coverage of PlayStation software and hardware.

Both development teams recognize this, and the easy (and unacceptable) answer is that the games give you the ability to modify your roster through trades, signings, etc. But you know what? I sure as hell don't have time to do all of that. Getting only half of the rosters up to speed would take a lot of research and manual labor—and I think that when people shell out 40 bucks for a game, they expect that sort of stuff to be done. Also, I'm lazy.

The bad news is that we've created this problem because we're so quick to buy the first football game we see, but that's no excuse for this release date pandering. The good news is that there are some solutions. We've gotten wind that EA is seriously thinking about selling memory card updates of their rosters in some fashion. That's a step in the right direction, but I want to see the price of these before I pass judgement. They better not think they can charge another 15 bucks for something that should have been shipped in their game to begin with. If those are successful, it could start a dangerous trend.

In the end, I think that the PlayStation 2 will be the solution. It will no doubt have online capability, thus allowing us sports gamers to continually download and update our rosters from a master site for free. EA already does this with their PC games, and it should work just as well for the PlayStation 2. By no means should this let 989 Sports and EA Sports off the hook in the here and now, but it does point to a happy ending for this annoying situation.

Kraig Kujawa
Editor-in-Chief

On the Cover Japanese Star Wars & Star Trek poster artist Tsuneo Sanda, whose online gallery can be viewed at www.planetsanda.com

Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine

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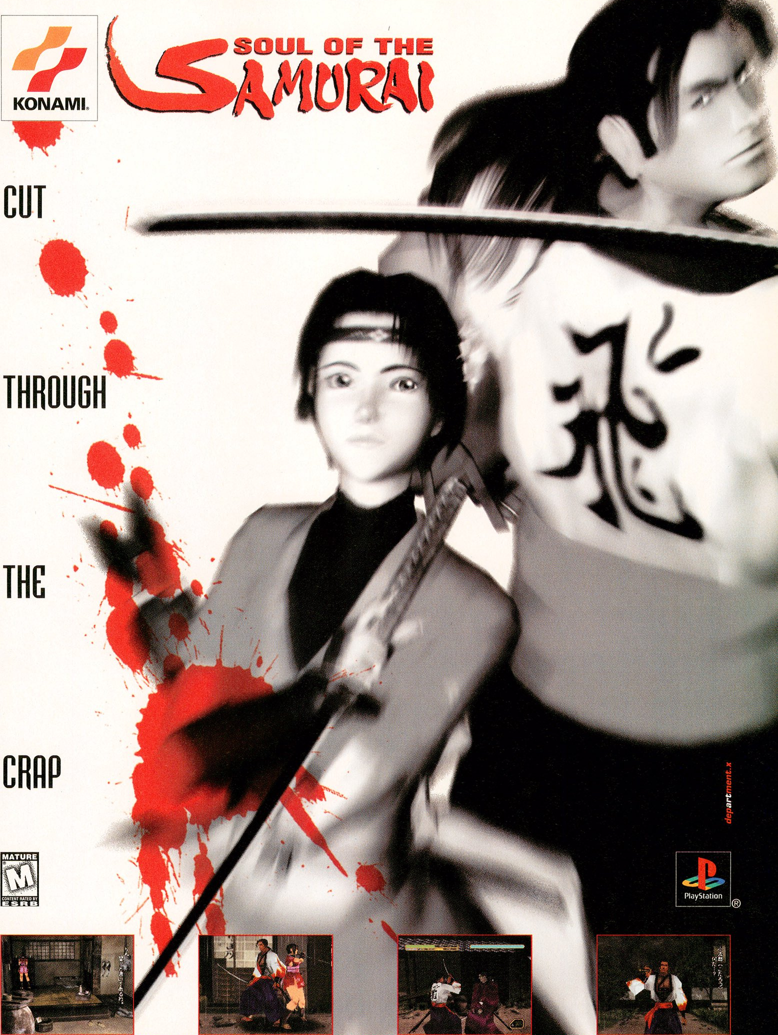
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SOUL OF THE SAMURAI
CUT
THROUGH
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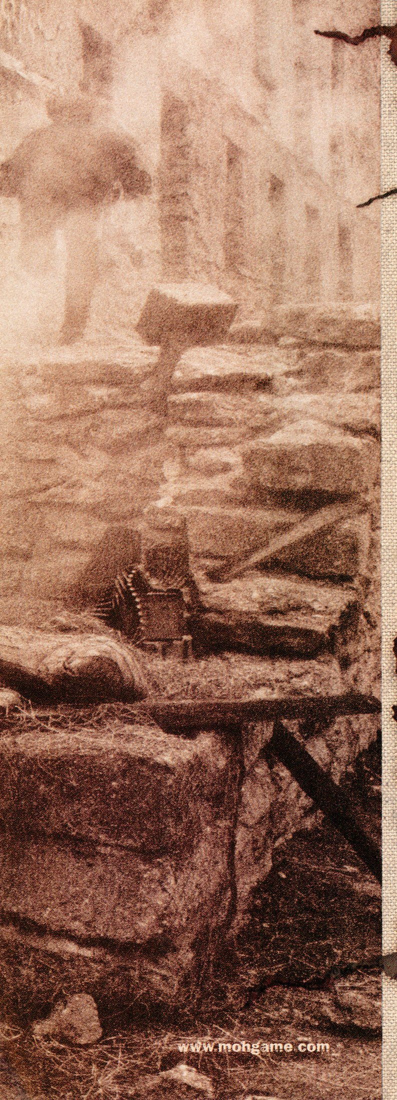

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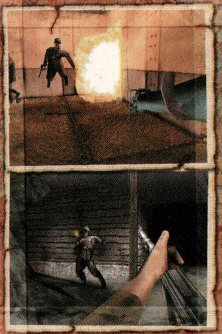
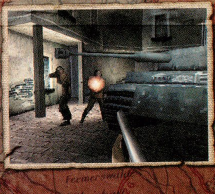


Your mission: execute high-risk rescues, evade **Gestapo** search parties, and sabotage enemy **U-boats**. All to cripple the **Nazi regime** and ensure freedom.



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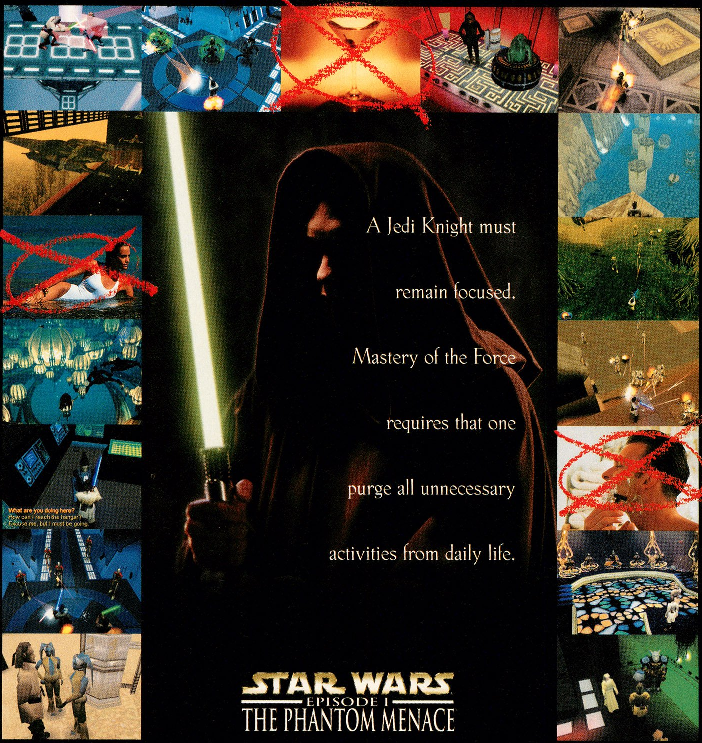
A Jedi Knight must
remain focused.
Mastery of the Force
requires that one
purge all unnecessary
activities from daily life.
What are you doing here?
How can I reach the hangar?
Excuse me, but I must be going.
STAR WARS
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Prepare to immerse yourself in the epic adventure that is *The Phantom Menace*. As the central character, you will journey to all the stunning locations of Episode I, where you are destined to play a decisive role in every key event. All-consuming? Yes. But then, there's no such thing as a part-time Jedi.

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"The ultimate motocross simulation!"
- PlayStation Magazine

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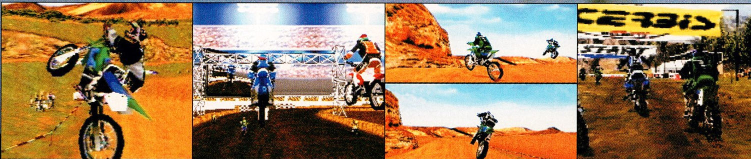
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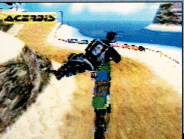

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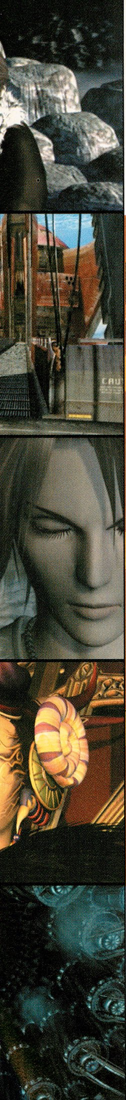
Final Fantasy VIII

PlayStation



Contents

Final Fantasy VIII

Square's magnum opus is about to take the U.S. by storm. In the calm preceding its arrival, we take an in-depth look at the El Niño of PlayStation RPGs.

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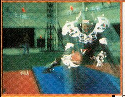
Battle of the Brutes



Once again it's time for a look at the best of this fall's football games. We go into the locker rooms to talk to 989 Sports and EA to get the scoop.

104

WipeOut 3

After a noticeable hiatus, the WipeOut series returns with a vengeance. Check out our preview of the forthcoming third title in Psygnosis' trend-setting series.

50

Jade Cocoon Strategy

So you wanna be a Cocoon Master, eh? Our strategy guide will make you into a first-rate beastie breeder, no problemo!

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Letters

The future of the Resident Evil movie is discussed, some insightful discussion of DVD laser lenses is had and one reader tells us what is going on in this picture (shown right).

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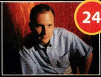
News

We probe the mind of SCEA's vice president of third-party relations (Phil Harrison, shown right), talk to a scientist with games on the brain and showcase Sony's new Metreon store.



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Previews

Ride along as we scope out WipeOut 3, Mag 3, Metal Gear Solid: VR Missions, Xena, Hot Wheels Turbo Racing, Jet Moto 3, Thousand Arms, Wu-Tang, Bass Landing and Vigilante 8: 2nd Offense.

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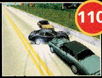
International

Pepsiman comes to save the day! We also look at Square's titles Chrono Cross and Vagrant Story as well as Goo! Goo! Soundy, Geppy-X and Space Invaders 2000.

86

Reviews

NFL Blitz 2000, NFL Xtreme 2, Rising Zan, Tarzan, WWF Attitude, Um Jammer Lammy, Sled Storm, The Next Tetris, Soul of the Samurai and Driver (at last) all get put to the test.



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Tricks

This month we have a Syphon Filter cinema code, level select for R-Type delta, life-saving level restart code for Ape Escape, new codes for Driver, Croc 2, Destrega and more!

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g.e.a.r.

It's Final Fantasy VIII month at *OPM* and we round it out by showcasing the new line of figures from Bandai. We also show the new Tilt Force controller and a PlayStation carrying case.

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Demo Disc

Um Jammer Lammy is playable this month, as are Sled Storm, Chocobo Racing and Pong. There's also videos of Toy Story 2, Vigilante 8: The Second Offense and NFL GameDay 2000.

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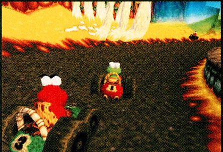
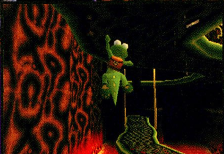
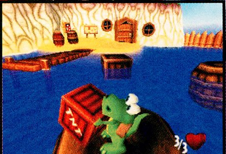
CROC'S BACK WITH A BUNCH



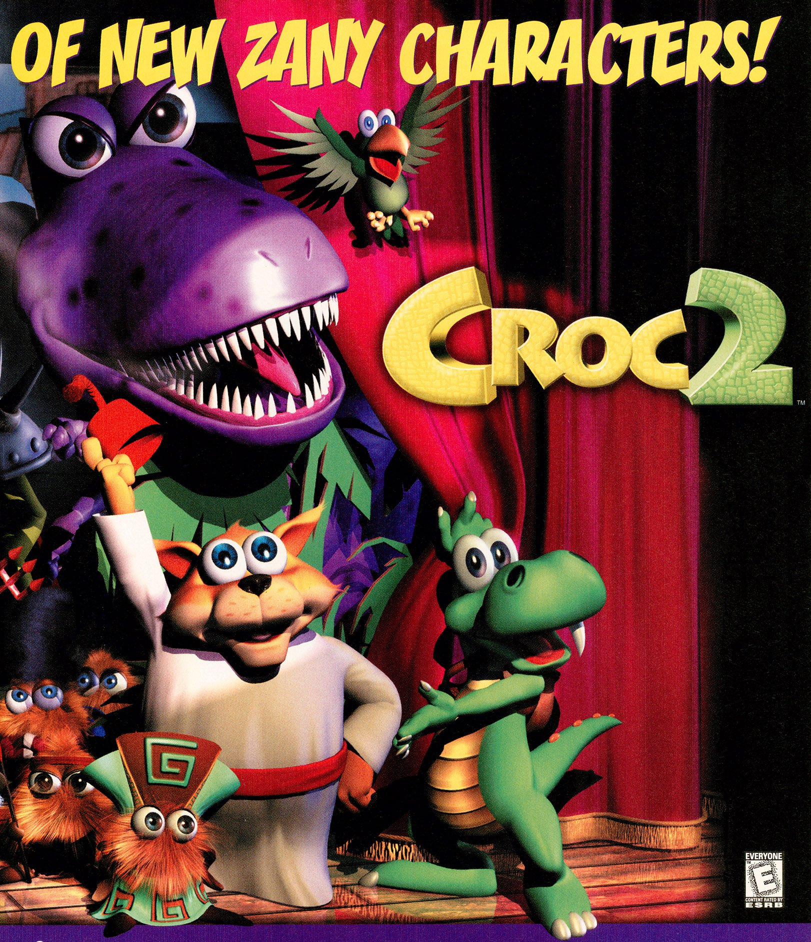
Croc races into action in a go-kart, hang glider, speedboat, mine cart and a hot air balloon!



Croc hurries along pathways, and scurries below them.



Croc picks up and throws objects to discover hidden clues!



Croc's back in an exciting new adventure as he searches for his long lost parents. But the search soon becomes a showdown as Croc's archenemy, Baron Dante, is magically resurrected by his evil Dantinis. Join Croc's journey as he explores over 40 levels within four Gobbo tribe villages, each packed with unique Gobbos, mischievous monsters, and tons of fun!

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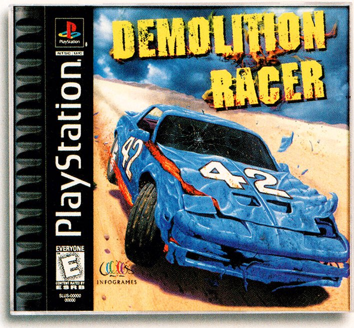
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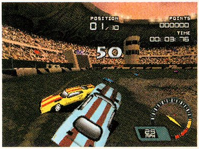
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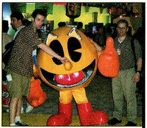
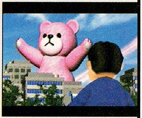
Caption Contest Winner



"You know, these game-specific controllers have gotten way out of hand."
Alex Thompson
Charleston, WV

Now you too can have your shot at history with the OPM Caption Contest! Every month, we run a game-related picture or screenshot. Your job is to write a humorous caption for it and submit it to us at any of the addresses on the following Letters page. The winner will be chosen by the following scientific method: We'll read them all, and the one that makes us laugh our asses off will get a sparkling new game or game-related item. Now, see what you can do with this pic:



[You didn't really think those were the official rules, did you? For all the legal stuff on this and our other contests, please refer to page 145.]

Lens Flare

Dear *OPM*,

I was reading your August '99 issue and came across a minor error in the News section pertaining to the PS2. You stated in the article that Sony has developed a new laser that can read the data off both DVD and normal CDs, and that until now consumer DVD players have needed two lasers to read both formats. However, this is not the case. Sony has been using two lasers in their players, for the purpose of extending the life of the laser assembly by having one laser optimized and focused for CD and another for DVD, so there is no refocusing, which can shorten the assembly life significantly. But other manufacturers have been using single lasers since DVD was first introduced, almost two years ago now.

Andrew Beaton
via the Internet

Thanks for clearing this up. You're right; the wording in the article does seem to imply that other DVD manufacturers have not been using the single-lens format, but the intent was to communicate that current Sony players don't use this design, but now that they have developed a cheaper, more reliable single-lens assembly they may include them in their own DVD players. Sorry for the confusion.

The Future of Evil

Dear *OPM*,

What happened to the Resident Evil movie? Is it ever coming out? Who has been cast, if casting has started yet? Has George Romero's script really been dumped? Thanks.

Andrew Hagar
hagar@ibm.net

Our sister mag *Electronic Gaming Monthly* conducted an interview recently with Yoshiki Okamoto, president of Flagship, the Capcom subsidiary responsible for maintaining quality and continuity throughout the RE franchise. He confirmed that Romero had been fired because the script he presented wasn't good enough.

As far as the movie is concerned, said Okamoto, "We know the movie is going to be out there someday. There is a scenario coming, but there is no script yet." And no casting info has been released, either; it's unlikely they've begun casting without a script. Looks like we may have to wait a good, long time to see RE on the big screen.

Letter of the Month

Dear OPM,

As a kid in the '50s I played Cowboys and Indians. I was always the cowboy. But, as an adult, not only have I never harmed an Indian, I came close to marrying one. In the '60s I traded in my six-shooters for a Thompson submachine gun and singlehandedly won World War II several times over in my own backyard. But I have never killed anyone in real life, or even pointed a gun in anger—or stupidity, for that matter.

I got hooked on video games in the '80s. I have many games now, but my favorites are the three Twisted Metals, Rogue Trip and V8. I love blowing up, running over and totalling other vehicles. I'm saying this because I am also a road service tech. I get paid to run our nation's roads. And my driving record is squeaky clean: No accidents, no tickets.

What I'm getting at is that I grew up understanding that I am responsible for the things I do. If I spill hot coffee in my lap I will blame myself, not the guy who sold it to me. I smoke, but no cigarette company tied me to a chair and made me do it.

It has just gotten way too easy to blame someone else for the choices we ourselves make. The Founding Fathers gave us the freedom of choice, and we have turned it into the freedom to blame anyone but ourselves for whatever part of ourselves we are not happy with.

So, just to let you know, if I ever do something really stupid, I certainly won't be pointing any fingers at my failed marriage, my video games, or a very informative magazine such as yours.

Charles Radatz
McDonough, GA

We weren't going to print any more letters about video game violence and its related issues, but this one seemed to close the subject very eloquently. Thanks to all who have contributed to this important topic. Let's hope we won't need to bring it up again.

Do you think you have what it takes to write the Letter of the Month? Send us your timely, original, well-written video game expositions (you don't even have to agree with us!) and you too could win an official OPM Box of Joy. New surprise goodies every month!

Can You Do Our Job Better Than Us?

***OPM* is looking for talented individuals who know the PlayStation, its games and its culture. If you're a good writer with a sense of humor and a passion for playing games, then we want to hear from you! Mail all résumés and writing samples to:**

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we want your input!

How do you like the mag? What about the design? Are we leaving anything out?

Let us know!

To get special attention as far as design and content issues go, label your letters or e-mails with the heading: PlayStation Magazine suggestions c/o the Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine at the addresses on the final Letters page.
We can't wait to hear from you.

The Wild West Was Never this Wild!

Do you have what it takes to shoot and slice your way through 10 action–packed levels and become the "Super Ultra Sexy Hero"? Rising Zan: The Samurai Gunman takes you back to the wild west of 1800's where, armed with only a gun, Katana sword, and some ultra sexy moves, you'll face a town full of the meanest, ugliest and weirdest outlaws you've ever seen.

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- Lots of 3rd person super ultra sexy action
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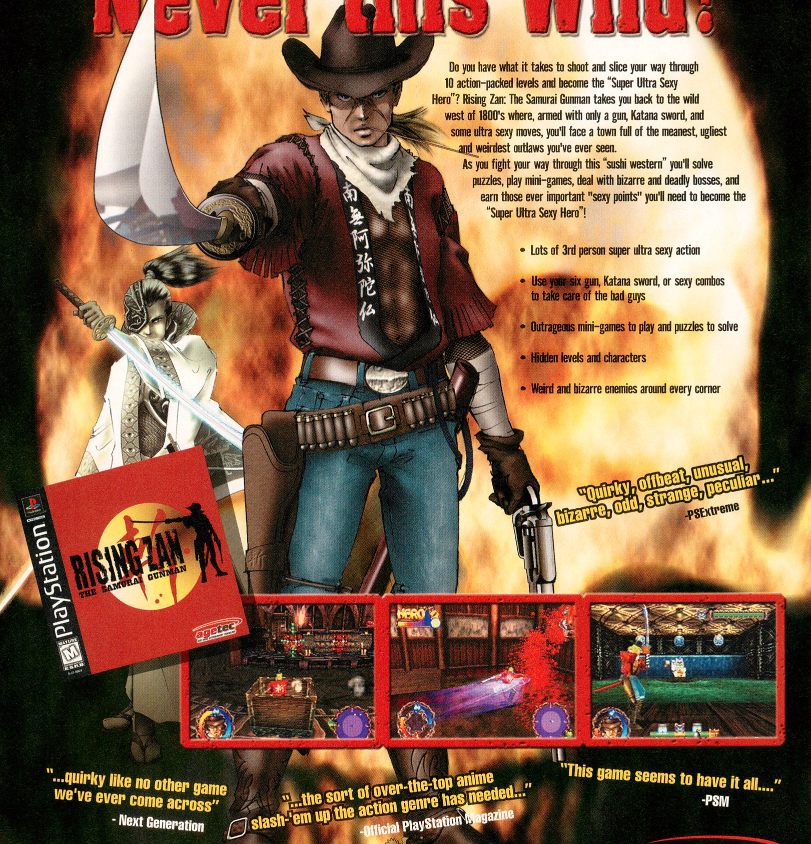

"Quirky, offbeat, unusual, bizarre, odd, strange, peculiar..."
-PSExtreme

"...quirky like no other game we've ever come across"
- Next Generation

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-Official PlayStation Magazine

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-PSM

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Letters

A glimpse into the demented minds of our readers

Did you buy a copy of our magazine that did not contain a demo CD? Simply send the receipt in an envelope marked "OPM Replacement Disc" to the address below with the name and address of the store plus your phone number and address and we'll send you the disc. Make sure you specify which month the corresponding disc belongs to in order to ensure you get the right one.

Also, if you have a malfunctioning or non-working demo disc, call SCEA at 1-800-345-SONY. They will provide instructions to obtain repair or replacement services. For more information see this month's Demo Disc section.

We Own You

Dear *OPM*,

How come at the start of every letter in *OPM*, it starts with "Dear OPM,"? Do you guys add that or do you have some evil psychokinesis-type mind grasp on all your readers that makes them start every letter with "Dear *OPM*,"?

Michael Cheng
San Diego, CA

Despite the consistency of our letters, there are no psychic forces at work. Every now and then coincidences just happen. Apparently, our readers are simply in perfect harmony with us and each other. Really. Of course, there are other ways to influence people, but we'd never stoop to using subliminal messages or anything like that. Paranoia is a dangerous thing, Michael—you should learn to trust more.

Primate Protest

Dear *OPM*,

I really enjoyed your 25 Games You Must Play in 1999 feature [Vol. 2 Iss. 10], but I noticed something rather odd about it: Where the hell is Ape Escape in the top 25?! It topped the Editors' Top Five, it was among two out of four editors' current favorites, and it somehow doesn't make it to the top 25?! It didn't even make it to the "Close But No Cigar" bin! Are you out of your minds?! Or were you so immersed in playing it that you forgot to chuck it in there?! I mean, the list is "Top 25 Games You Must Play in 1999" and I think a gold five-disc rating merits a spot in that list. I mean, the game DID come out in 1999, and you seem to want people to play this game, so what's the deal?

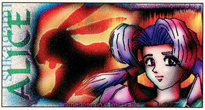
"Dr. Chicken"
wargk@hotmail.com

Guess we should have pointed out in the feature intro that we restricted the voting to games that were not yet at the reviewable stage. Our reasoning was that a review was endorsement enough; we didn't want to take up precious feature space with games we critiqued elsewhere in the issue—especially considering how hard we struggled to pare the list down to 25. And besides, if we'd included finished games we wouldn't have been able to spout off about what could go wrong! Where's the fun in that?

Do you have any questions about your subscription to *OPM*? Point your browser to http://subscribe.playstationmagazine.com/service and fill out the appropriate form. With a credit card, you can even start a new subscription!

Reader Art for the New Millennium

Every month we'll be picking one exceptional piece as our Reader Art of the Month. The creator of the winning work will have his/her piece published and will receive a new game or game-related item in the mail—so include your mailing address with all submissions. Runners-up (as many as we want, 'cause it's our magazine) are printed as well. Good luck!



Check out this month's artists! Clockwise from above: our winner Michael Enriquez, Tujunga, CA; Kara Hedge, Moravia, IA; Audra Furuichi, Honolulu, HI; Jason E. Cross, New Orleans, LA; and Cynthia Thompson, Akron, OH. Good job, folks! Keep the submissions coming.

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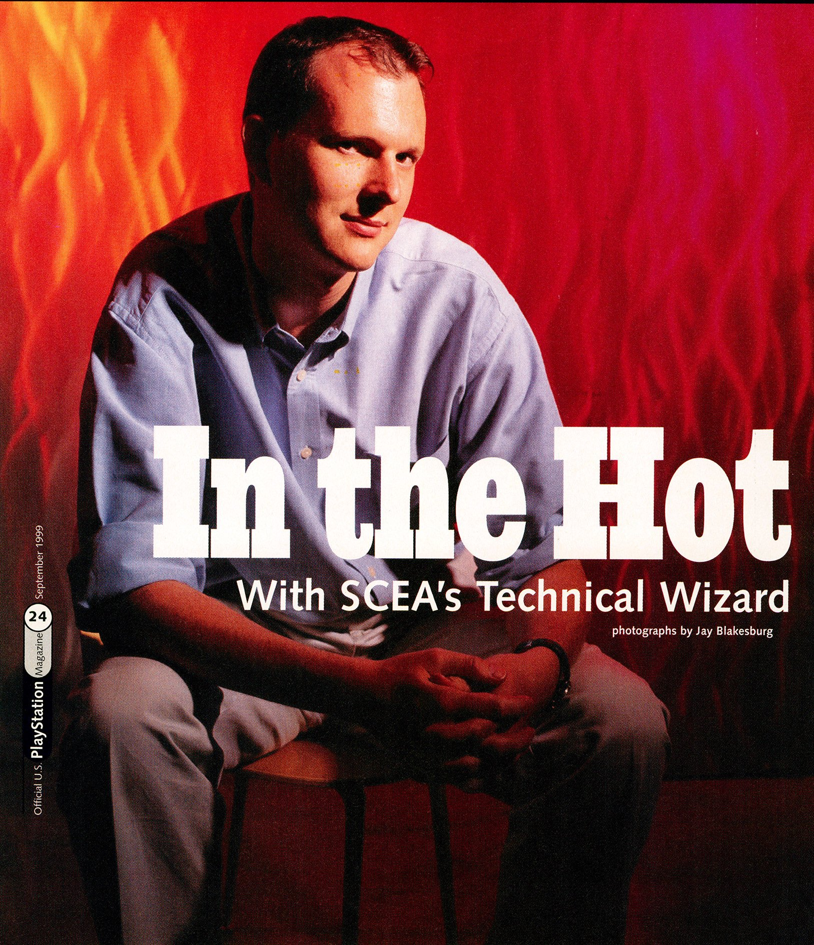


In the Hot

With SCEA's Technical Wizard

photographs by Jay Blakesburg

Seat

Phil Harrison

Phil Harrison is a busy man.

As vice president of third-party relations and research and development for Sony Computer Entertainment America, Harrison certainly has his hands full—not only working with the most successful game platform ever, but also gearing up for the highly anticipated next-generation PlayStation.

We recently caught up with the very tall exec to talk with him about middleware, Sony's program of technology partners that will provide tools and solutions for developers working on PlayStation 2 games. But we ended up chatting about much more, ranging from changing the way developers think to changing the way we play games.

OPM: One of the big concerns surrounding the PlayStation 2 is that only two or three developers can actually develop for it. Will middleware help level that playing field—allow some of the smaller players to get in?

Phil Harrison: That comment about only two or three developers being able to create for the machine didn't come from us. That's a crazy notion that I don't support at all. But the middleware program certainly does allow very small developers to gain access to cumulatively hundreds of man-years of R&D effort that perhaps they wouldn't be able to afford themselves.

OPM: Does the middleware program help prove the PS2 is development-friendly?

PH: If you want proof of that, the best thing I can point to is the Gran Turismo demo that we showed at E3. It was one guy, and it took three weeks. So this is not the most complex thing in the world.

Below the Expression Layer

OPM: Define middleware.

PH: Halfway between software and hardware.

OPM: No, really...

PH: Actually, that's a pretty good description of what it is.

In any game there are a bunch of different layers to the technology and the creativity. At the very bottom is the hardware itself—in our case, the PlayStation chipset. The next layer up is the operating system. On top of that is what we call our library. And then on top of that is what we typically call the "expression layer." Above the expression layer is the stuff that's unique to a game. That's the creativity and content the developer brings to the product: the character design, the track design, the music, the sound effects, the animation, the video.

If I build a game today based on the current development methodology, I would have to create all the technology vertically, from the very lowest level at the interface with the hardware all the way up to the stuff you see on the screen that makes Gran Turismo look like Gran Turismo. That vertical integration is quite difficult to achieve.

What we're doing with middleware is allowing developers to gain access to tools and technology that are below the expression layer. Using technology that other companies produce, developers can create more sophisticated products quicker than they could on their own.

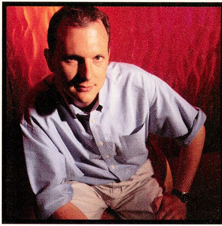
OPM: It sounds similar to a big developer reusing an engine, like Eidos reusing the Gex engine in different games.

PH: The distinction here is one between a vertically integrated piece of technology and a horizontally integrated one.

Vehicle dynamics, for example, is a very vertical, specific aspect of the game development pathway. You can bolt together a whole bunch of different middleware solutions to help build your game. You can buy the vehicle dynamics module from one company, the explosions module from another company, and link them all together. Conversely, horizontal integration occurs with a very high-level game engine like Gex or Unreal or Quake. Those engines tend to be very good at making games that look like their originator. The Quake engine is very good at making Quake-style games.

Works of Art

OPM: How will these tools change the development cycle?



PH: Middleware should in its most evolved form allow developers to get something up and running quicker than they have done previously—although I don't think it will change the overall development time. I think the total time to develop the game will remain constant.

What I think it will deliver is the ability for the portion related to R&D to be reduced and the portion related to tweaking and creativity and game design to be increased, which ultimately builds better products.

OPM: So it makes the next-generation PlayStation more of an artist's machine?

PH: That's the goal—to allow developers to spend their time, money and effort on innovation and creativity, rather than reinvention of the wheel technically.

OPM: Is there still the opportunity for the bigger development houses to "reinvent the wheel," to add something new technically as well as creatively?

PH: Of course. This is not the cure for world hunger. This is just a very targeted way of giving developers access to a very broad set of tools and technologies. It's up to the developers to deploy those technologies in the most effective and interesting way. Ultimately, you still have to design a game, you still have to make the characters fun and make the graphics look cool.

OPM: But middleware will make it much easier...

PH: "Easier" is perhaps a misleading word, because "easier" implies cheaper and quicker. I just think it makes development better. The ultimate beneficiary of all this is the game consumer, because games will be more fun, there'll be more of them and they will be at a higher level of technical quality.

Nothing to Fear

OPM: It seems your philosophy is to allow developers to focus on gameplay and game design rather than technology.

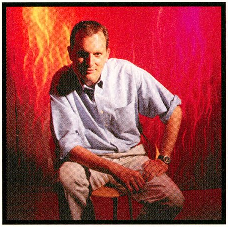
PH: Right. That's the important thing.

Phil Harrison (cont.)

OPM: But there's still this notion that the PS2 is so technically advanced that nobody can develop for it.

PH: Any new platform—and the next-generation PlayStation is not immune to this—will suffer from fear of the unknown. Developers are comfortable with the current PlayStation; they know how to maximize it. And as soon as they see the new machine, they're like: "Wow, this is really complicated. How are we going to take advantage of all this power?"

But when you actually get down to the nuts and bolts of the box, it's not difficult to develop for at all. It's actually very elegant in the way that it's been designed, and the architecture of the machine is really straightforward. So developers will have a lot fun developing games for it. That was certainly the response that we got from our developers conference that we had in June.



Evolution, Not Revolution

OPM: In the press kit that was sent when the tech specs were released, there were two quotes in there that stood out. One said, "Not only will this new CPU have application for games, but it will be the core media processor for future digital entertainment applications." Another described it as "the next step in the evolution of video gaming into a true entertainment medium." Is this your vision for the PS2? Do you see it becoming the centerpiece of your home entertainment system rather than a separate piece?

> **'There are over a billion color TVs on the planet. That's our total market.'**

PH: Yes, ultimately—but let me be very, very clear about how that gets deployed over time. Initially our focus is games. This is a game system, it will be the best game system the world has ever seen and is going to deliver some unbelievable game content.

What we will then do is—through the power of this technology and through the connectivity options the machine delivers—redefine the concept of what a game is over a period of time. Our goal is to increase the audience for our product beyond the consumer that we know today, who enjoys driving, fighting, shooting, sports or whatever.

OPM: You've already done that with the current PlayStation.

PH: More than we have seen in the past, that's for sure. We've taken a small step with the current PlayStation into broadening that demographic. That will continue with the new machine, and I think will accelerate as we deliver new forms of entertainment.

Ultimately the technology has a number of uses outside of the core gaming area, particularly online and with digital connectivity options that are delivered through USB and I-Link. Like being able to take a video feed or a still video camera image and manipulate that into a game, so you can paint yourself into a Chicago Bulls winning team and play alongside them.

OPM: Making games that are even more interactive?

PH: That's a short-term application. But ultimately there's no reason why the box could not be used for manipulating your digital still camera images and creating an interactive picture display.

Being There

OPM: The current PlayStation has broadened the market by adding more games for children, more edutainment titles and the like. How do you envision the next PlayStation will broaden the idea of what a game is?

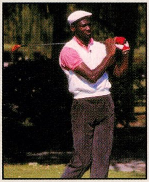
PH: Most of the games that we see today, regardless of their age group, are all about beating something or somebody, achieving a goal—some kind of ultimate expression of the power of the player over the environment or over the other characters. That's relevant to a large chunk of consumers. But I think there's also a bigger audience that's interested in interactive entertainment, which is just about being there. It doesn't necessarily require you to beat anybody or conquer anything. It's about enjoying a digital environment that takes you to a place you could never go to normally.

OPM: That could be enriched by going online, connecting with other people.

PH: It could be enriched by online, but you could just as easily visit a planet in a billion-star universe, each one of which is different. It could be a cool place to go inside your TV.

OPM: Sort of like Tail of the Sun, but a

The Rub



Jordan Makes Another Comeback

THE FACTS: Electronic Arts is reportedly pursuing the Michael Jordan license.

THE RUB: Jordan's sublime winning ways have never translated into video game success. Chaos in the Windy City, anyone? (Which, by the way, was released by EA when they last held the Jordan license.) But this time around Jordan is apparently trying to focus the license on a basketball or golf game, thereby avoiding a Shaq-Fu-sized fiasco.

Sincerest Form of Flattery

THE FACTS: Despite Sony's legal attempts to stop it, Bleem has gone retail and will be sold in major outlets across the country.

THE RUB: The PlayStation emulator, which runs on Windows-based PCs, is somewhat buggy, doesn't work with every game, and the version that shipped wasn't even the latest one. And while Bleem boasts that it sold 20,000 copies online prior to its retail release, well, let's see...that's a whopping 0.04% of the PlayStation's global market. And we're guessing that it won't sell too much more than that. So, Sony, relax already—no

hundred times more advanced.

PH: I don't think that's even a worthy comparison. I'm thinking about a fractally generated planet that has rivers, lakes, mountains, hills, deserts, trees, shrubs, clouds, weather—all of which works according to the rules of that planet. But there are a billion other planets, each one different, supporting a different ecosystem with a different level of weird five-legged wonders walking around.

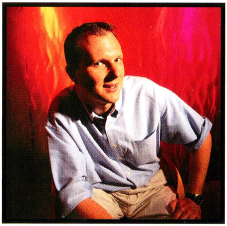
Each According to His Need

OPM: Any thoughts on your Internet strategy and connected games?

PH: We will encourage developers to create multiplayer online games from day one.

OPM: Will the PS2 ship with a modem?

PH: It won't ship with a modem. There's a very good reason for that. If we were to adopt a particular modem strategy today and include it in the hardware, then by the time we launch it would be obsolete. But by adopting USB, I-EEE 1394 and PCMCIA PC card interfaces on the machine as standard, consumers can add to their machine the widest variety of connectivity options at the price that's right for them and the performance that's most appropriate for the kind of content they're using.



Let me explain what I mean. If you're just using the machine for TV Web browsing—a very simple application—then a 56K USB modem would be more than sufficient. But if you want to be on the bleeding edge of the richest environment of multiplayer online games, with video and voice flying around on top of data, then you'd probably want to go to XDSL or cable modem.

It's important that the consumer has the choice to get the best and most appropriate connectivity option for them and for their game style.

One Billion and Counting

OPM: What kinds of numbers are you thinking about in terms of household penetration? The current PlayStation has now sold 56 million units.

PH: Yes, 56 million units *worldwide*. There are an awful lot of homes out there that we're not in.

There are two different ways of looking at this. There are over a billion color televisions on the planet. That's our total market. To be more realistic, there are about 98 million TV homes in North America, and we're in 20% of them right now. And that's a really good start, to be in 20% of the homes of a leading technology-adopting nation like the U.S.

I think we can do a lot better than 20%. I just think this technology is going to appeal to so many millions of more consumers than we've seen before.

A New Way to View

OPM: One thing the current PlayStation will be remembered for is that it brought video gaming into the mainstream. What will the next-generation PlayStation be remembered for?

PH: Changing the way we think about our television set. For most people the TV set is a way of passively receiving information. I think the next-generation PlayStation will revolutionize the relationship between the consumer and that TV set.

---

bleem!

real need to waste all that time and effort chasing down buggy, inconsequential emulators.

Ep. I Racer Stalls

THE FACTS: Just as we were going to press, LucasArts announced that they are "ceasing all development" on the expected PlayStation version of Star Wars: Episode I Racer. A source at LucasArts cited a lack of sufficient resources and timing issues as the reasons for the cancellation.

THE RUB: While unfortunate, this does allow the company to refocus all their PS resources to prevent further slippage on the Ep. I adventure game, which is now slated for a September release.

Roster Redo

THE FACTS: Now that EA is launching Madden NFL 2000, the newest edition of their football franchise, earlier than ever, there's a very good chance they'll sell memory cards with roster updates and other goodies in the future.

THE RUB: This makes a lot of sense, since the Madden vs.

(cont. on page 28)

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10 things we think we think this month

1 **The House voted down a proposal that would have put strict regulations on the sale or rental of violent video games to anyone younger than 17. Instead, they passed regulations prohibiting Dom DeLuise from ever appearing in a video game.**

2 **Activision announced their plans to release classic Intellivision games on the PlayStation. It will be called Easy Money Compilation Pack No. 3.**

3 **Brandi Chastain took her shirt off after scoring the winning goal in women's World Cup soccer. We sure hope EA Sports' FIFA 2000 development team was watching. And taking notes.**

4 **Final Fantasy VIII will be released right around the first week of September. That way Square can show Sega what a real launch is like.**

5 **In an effort to stop teen violence, Congress is trying to pass a bill that would require a three-day waiting period on all GunCons.**

6 **A-Train 6 is the sort of game that you wouldn't bat an eyelash at unless it was one of the first games for the PlayStation 2. Now we're even covering it in this News section.**

7 **If we get anymore mail asking if the PlayStation is Y2K compliant, we'll hang ourselves. Assuming the rope is Y2K compliant.**

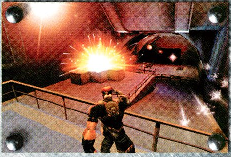
8 **FOX Sports announced they've signed Steve Smith, the first Atlanta Hawks player to endorse a video game. Yup, we checked—Atlanta does indeed have an NBA franchise.**

9 **EA Sports is planning on releasing a second, more dumbed-down NASCAR game that will be aimed at a younger audience. Apparently driving a car in an endless loop 100 times isn't simple enough.**

10 **Konami needs to sell the entire Soul of the Samurai team to third-world slave lords, then use the money to finance Silent Hill 2 for the PS2.**

CORE
Sega
Dreamcast

So waste anything that moves.



You're **Hawk Manson**, lone survivor of the covert government espionage crew, SI-COPS, trekking through strategic R&D installations on an **all new 3D game engine** in the ultimate mission of extermination. Utilize **an arsenal of hand-to-hand combat moves** and **over 20 new weapons**. And if that's not enough, just pick up random objects and use them to deter enemies from breathing. Your plate's pretty full, but you're all alone. So get it in gear.

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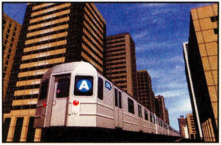


PlayStation 2 [UPDATE]

With rumors, suggestions and the occasional confirmed fact swirling around, two Japanese developers have stepped forward to officially announce games and even reveal some early screenshots for the PlayStation 2. First was **ArtDink**, which plans to release as a launch title A-Train 6, a simulator that allows you to build a city and its transit system.

More impressive, though, is **Koei's** Kessen (or "Decisive Battle"), a strategy game in which up to 300 horses can appear in combat at once. As you can see from the three screenshots below, the graphics are quite detailed and incredibly lush. (In fact, only the middle picture is from a cinema; the other two show actual gameplay.) Koei has also announced that its game will be a DVD title, and that it'll cost roughly $4 million to produce.

70% **of respondents to a videogames.com poll said they would "definitely" buy the PlayStation 2. An additional 23% said they might buy the system.**

Neither title is slated to come to the U.S., but we're betting Kessen might make it to our shores, especially due to the growing interest in real-time strategy titles.

Meanwhile, more and more developers are signing on for the PlayStation 2. Here's some highlights from the past month:

Square is developing three PS2 titles, one of which is Ehrgeiz 2.

Titus announced its intentions to develop for the PS2. The company has also nabbed the elusive Robocop license (what a coup!), which includes the rights to develop games for all systems, including the PS2. Hmmmm...

We hear that **989 Studios** is already hard at work planning out PS2 titles, as key members of the team have apparently been sent to Japan to study the system.

A **Criterion** producer suggested that Trickstyle, a Dreamcast launch title, may appear on the PS2.

We recently received confirmation that **Midway** will develop a Spy Hunter game for the PS2—which we had already reported last month as a possibility.

Acclaim indicated in a financial statement that it plans to support the PS2. We hear they'll be bringing their wrestling franchise to the next generation.

Our Japanese corespondent tells us that **Konami** is already working on several titles for the PS2, including Microsoft Flight Simulator and Mech Warriors.

Stormfront Studios, the developer of NASCAR 99, is working on a PS2 title.

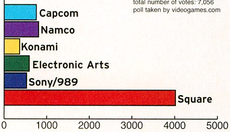
I-Design is reportedly developing a game called Silly Billy, a humorous title aimed at gamers of all ages.

According to a European trade magazine, a new developer named **Qube**, composed of former Microsoft Direct 3D programmers, will be developing titles for PS2.

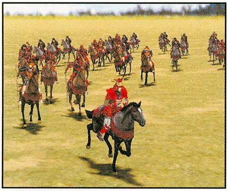
Both **Naughty Dog** and **Insomniac** will develop titles for the PS2, and may already be at work planning them out.

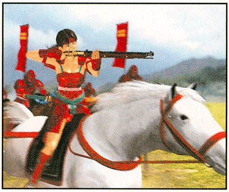
And in the category of pure speculation, **GT Interactive** announced it's working on a sequel to Driver, and that they're considering all platforms. Guess which platform we hope is at the top of the list...

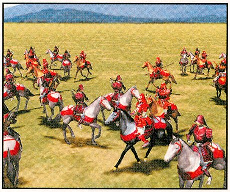
Which developer is most essential for the PlayStation 2's success?



total number of votes: 7,056
poll taken by videogames.com







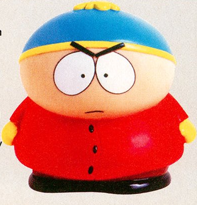
The Rub

GameDay war is starting to hurt consumers now that the two publishers are rushing their games out of the door—with very incomplete rosters. If EA does this, you can bet that 989 Studios won't be far behind. Hopefully the online component of the PlayStation 2 will make it much easier for gamers, since presumably they could hook into the Internet and download the latest rosters.

Spirit of Christmas

THE FACTS: There'll be three South Park games on the PlayStation in time for the holiday season.

THE RUB: Everyone's favorite foul-mouthed foursome will indeed be starring in a trio of titles. First off is a port of the N64 game released last year, which is due by the end of summer. Then there's Chef's Luv Shack, a multiplayer trivia title complete with minigames like "Spank the Monkey with Mr. Mackey" and "Beefcake" (in which Cartman waddles across the screen guzzling cans of Weight Gain 4000). Finally, there's South Park Rally, a kart-style racing/combat game. We hear the games will be packaged with warnings about the South Park's mature content and language—yeah, that'll keep the kids away...



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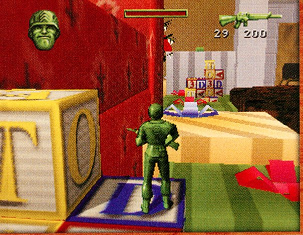

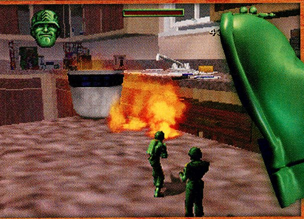

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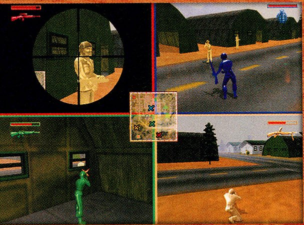

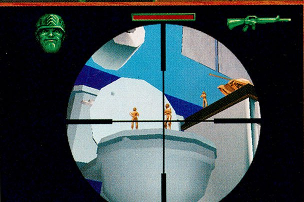

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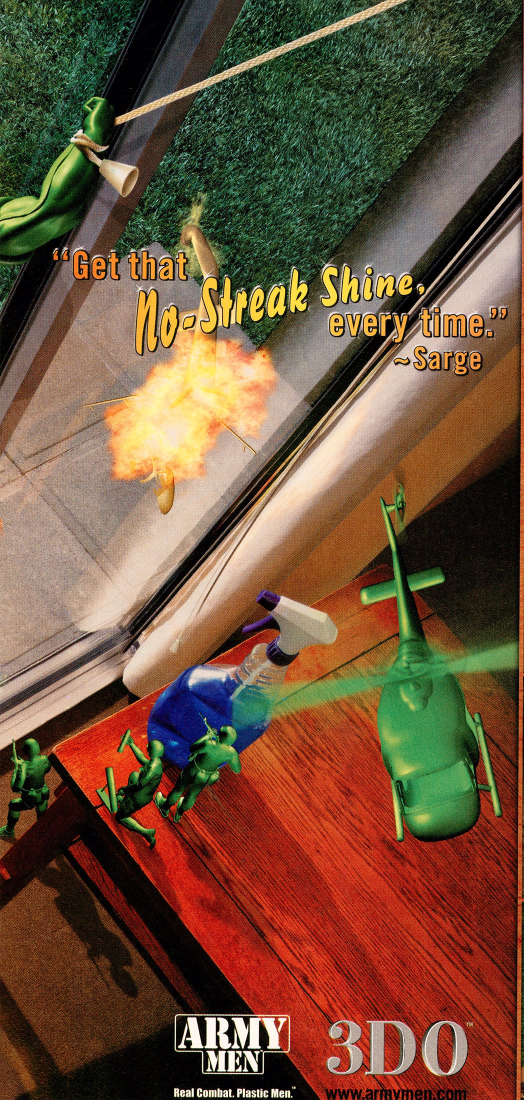
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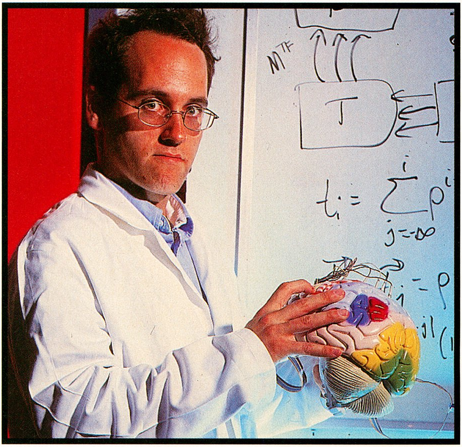
Games On The Brain

Science and video games unite to unlock the brain's inner workings



It's not often that you see *electroencephalographic activity* and *video game* in the same sentence, but thanks in part to Michael Kahana, the two now go together quite nicely.

Kahana, an assistant professor of psychology and neuroscience at Brandeis University, along with a team of scientists and doctors, recently completed a study of the inner workings of the brain—using, of all things, a video game.

During the study, patients at the Children's Hospital in Boston were wired to scores of monitoring electrodes while they made their way through virtual mazes. The scientists found that theta waves, a brain activity long associated with spatial navigation and learning in animals, also play a similar role in the human mind.

The study has enormous implications, says Kahana, because in the past few years there have been "literally a thousand or more papers with animals studying these brain waves." And now all that research is applicable to how the human brain works. "We filled the link between animals and humans," Kahana says.

An important link, to be sure—but why use a video game? Well, first of all, it's a lot more practical than trying to record the brain waves of patients as they walk through life-sized rat mazes. Plus, "you can control the variables with beautiful precision," Kahana says.

Kahana and his team have done other studies with games as well. For example, they found that by changing the "optic flow" of an environment, which is somewhat like the frame-rate of a game, you could affect how well a person learns his way around an environment. "What we're doing in the game is essentially taking away what God or science has given us, and showing that that matters," Kahana explains.

"It's a basic science discovery, but it's something that we could not have discovered without using video game technology."

Kahana and his team are currently working on a new game that puts you in the role of a cab driver in a randomly generated virtual city. You have to find passengers and get them to their destinations, while managing resources like gas and money. Using a game like this allows Kahana to study a whole new set of subjects that normally wouldn't sit still for extended testing of memory and learning skills—that is, children.

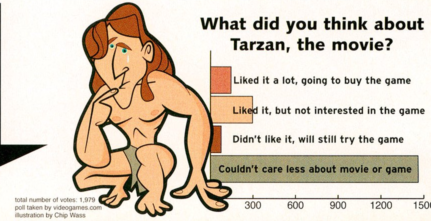
"The idea is that it's a fun game for kids, who wouldn't have the patience or attention to do real memory experiments where they're told they have to memorize their way through a maze," says Kahana. "But if you make it fun for them, then you can begin to do tests on kids."

While we're not likely to see a PlayStation in Kahana's lab anytime soon, we're sure to see many more experiments using video games. "Video games could be used as incredible tools," says Kahana, "to probe the processes underlying cognition, memory, learning and navigation."

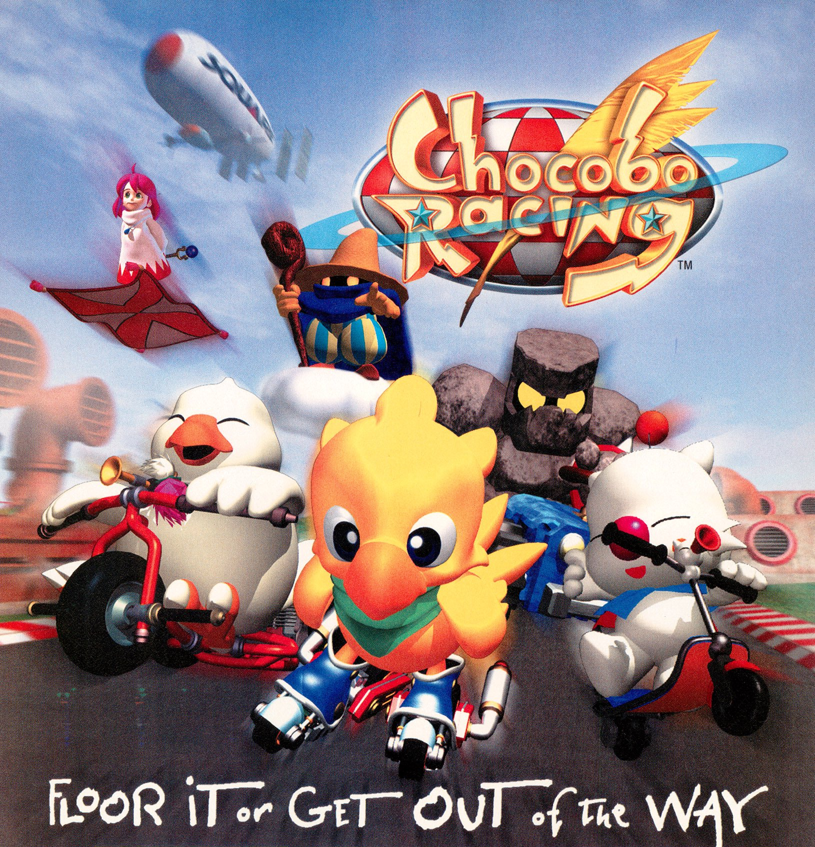
$99 PRICE DROP

No official price drop has been announced yet, and when contacted about a $99 price, a Sony representative simply said, "Our MSRP is $129." But a source inside Sony confirmed the drop, pegging it for Aug. 31—just in time to steal some more thunder from a certain system launch.

What did you think about Tarzan, the movie?



total number of votes: 1,979
poll taken by videogames.com
illustration by Chip Wass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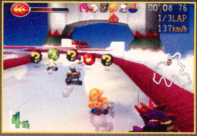

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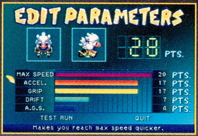

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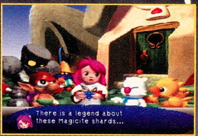

There is a legend about these Magicite shards...

Unlock hidden characters, tracks and more within the Story Mode

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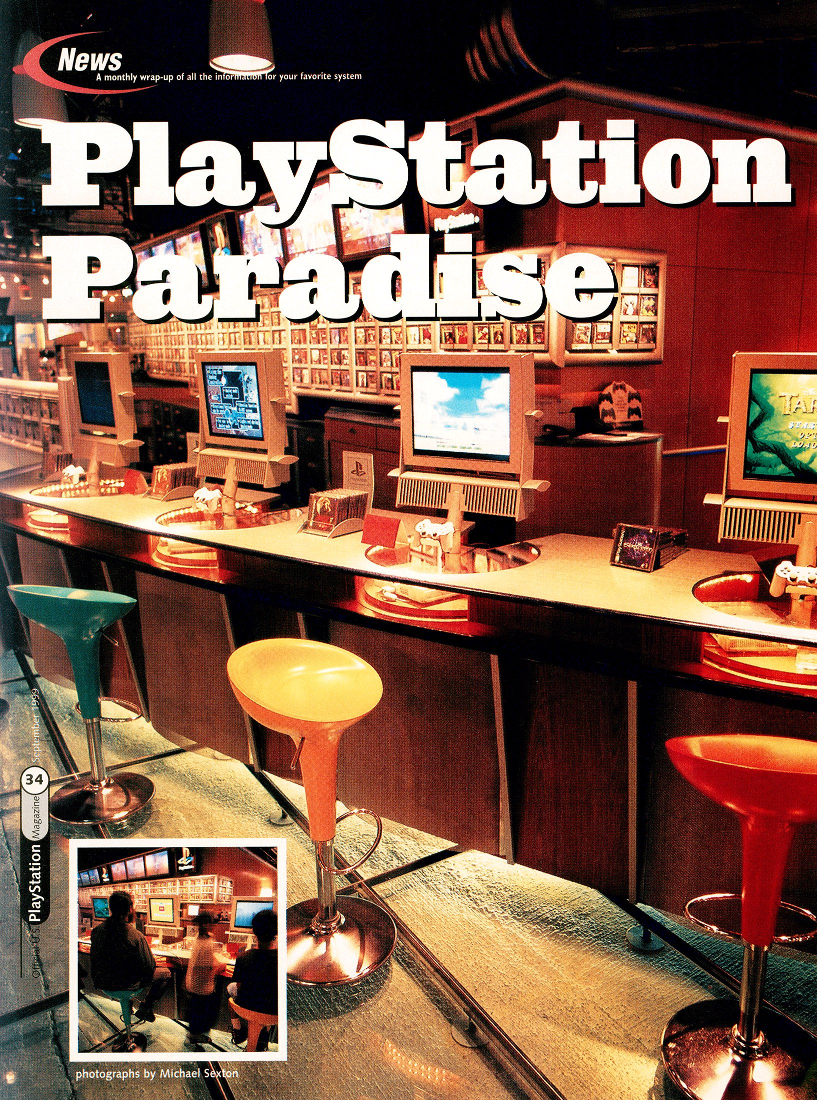
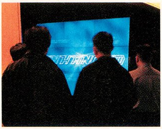
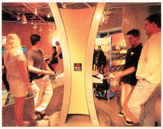
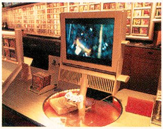
PlayStation Paradise

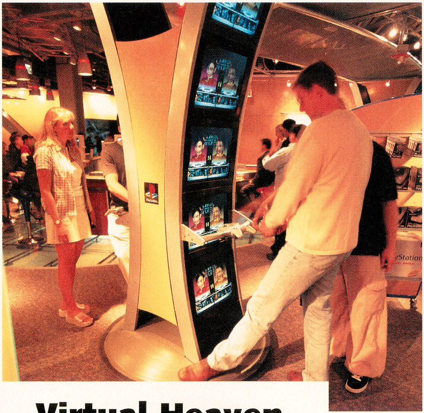


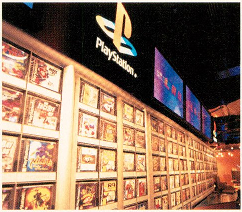
photographs by Michael Sexton

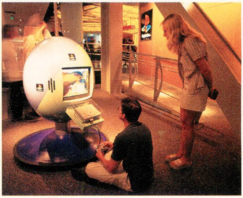












Virtual Heaven for PlayStation Fanatics at the Metreon in San Francisco

Picture, if you will, 5,500 square feet of store space devoted solely to everything PlayStation. Actually, you don't have to imagine it—just take a look at these eye-popping photos from our recent visit to the first-ever PlayStation store at Sony's new Metreon complex in San Francisco.

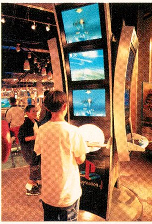
On the ground level of a four-floor, 350,000 square-foot entertainment complex housing theaters, restaurants, shopping and all kinds of interactive entertainment venues, is a store simply called "PlayStation." Inside are 30 gaming stations ranging from ground-level egg-like blobs for the tykes to four-screen wonders that stretch well above even the tallest gamer. And then there's the games bar—a row of screen after screen of game stations, all with the latest games constantly being rotated into the PlayStations. What's more, the stations can be linked up for multiplayer action.

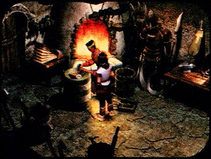
If that's not enough, there's a small theater room with a wall of TV screens showing the PlayStation 2 demos. Or how about all kinds of merchandise, from Ape Escape dolls to licensed accessories to clothes and magazines and collectibles? And don't forget the almost 200 titles that are currently in stock.

As you'd expect, the crowds are there. "We see every kind of customer you can imagine," says Jeff Russell, a manager at the store. On the Wednesday night that we stopped by, everyone from children with their parents to young couples to a pair of nuns (really) stopped in. And of course, there are plenty of fanboys. Avery Tingle, a PlayStation clerk, described to us what he calls "Metreon mascots," a group of kids who hang around so much that they know everyone by name, sometimes greet people at the door, and even help work the floor (unofficially and unpaid, of course).

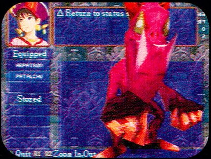
But for Juan Villanueva, another manager, the best thing about the store is "watching the kids get happy and seeing the parents' expressions when we say, 'It's all free—you can play anything you want.'"

And if that isn't convincing enough, take this statement from one anonymous staffer: "I'd work here for free—but don't tell my boss!"

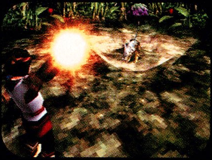




Uniquely immersive role-playing experience is limited only by your imagination.



Collect over 150 creatures including rare and ultra-rare breeds. Then custom combine them into millions of powerful new monsters.



Strategically use your monster's dominance of one of the four elements: Earth, Wind, Fire or Water.

INFINITE MONSTERS

Pit your creation against a friend in the arena mode.

Welcome to the world of Jade Cocoon: Story of the Tamamayu. As Levant, a Cocoon Master, you will engage powerful monsters in deadly one on one combat. As the magic and talon clash of these titanic battles turn to your favor you can call on the mystic Cocoon powers and capture a fallen foe as they are on the brink of death. Once captured these mighty creatures can be trained to fight for you and combined with other monsters to form millions of new beasts. Once created these creatures will be your key to surviving the perils of the forest.

TEEN T CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

PlayStation

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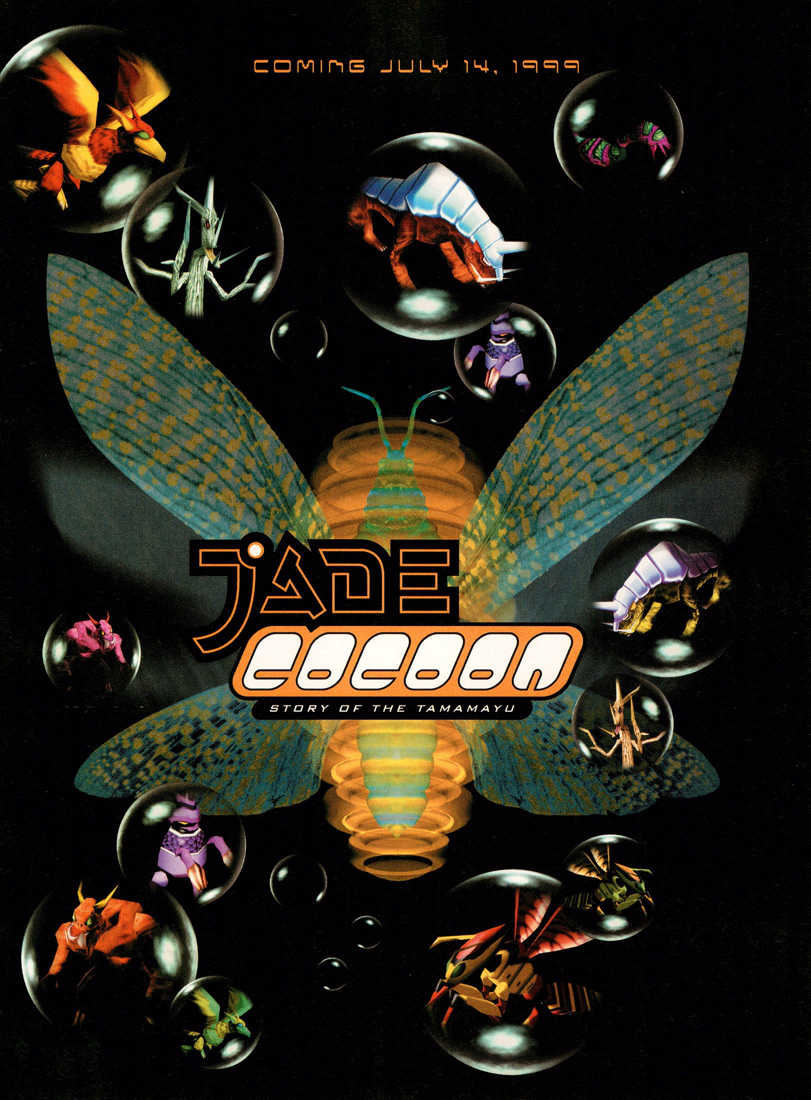

COMING JULY 14, 1999
JADE
COCOON
STORY OF THE TAMAMAYU

Washington Watch

Congress Kills Media Violence Bill

Shortly after we went to press last month, the House voted down a proposal that would have put strict regulations on the sale or rental of violent video games to anyone younger than 17. Retailers that violated the proposed regulations would have faced five-year jail terms.

The bill was sponsored by Henry Hyde, a Republican from Illinois, and also covered other media like films, books and pictures. It was rejected by a vote of 282–146.

PS2 Not a Security Risk!

Talk around Washington recently suggested that the PlayStation 2 is so powerful that it would be subject to export restrictions. But rather than face the absurdity of classifying a video game system as a security risk, the Clinton administration decided to ease the restrictions on the types of technology that can be exported to nations that may be working on nuclear weapon technology (e.g., China, India and Russia).

The move affects not only Sony's PlayStation, but also $4 billion worth of business that could have been lost to overseas computer vendors.

The Color Purple

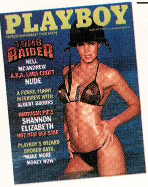
At the press conference regarding export limitations, an interesting side story emerged. Secretary of Commerce William Daley was quoted in Reuters, an international news service, saying: "If the president had not taken this step, this PlayStation, which will be available at the holiday season this year, would be controlled." The Reuters reporter noted that Daley held up a "purple, plastic machine."

This news was quickly picked up by the online gaming press. Videogames.com ran a headline saying "Purple PlayStation In Washington," and asked, "Could this be the upcoming PlayStation 2?" Another gaming Web site wrote: "A purple, plastic Sony machine? Is that what the new PlayStation 2 looks like?" (Sony denied that it was the PS2 in that site's story.) And one trade publication speculated that the object was actually a PlayStation debug system (which come in blue and green).

We wanted to get to the bottom of this, so we placed a call to the Department of Commerce in Washington. According to a spokeswoman, it's just a standard gray PlayStation. "I think we borrowed it from a secretary's, like, son," she said.

So there you have it. No PS2 unveiled in Washington, no government cover-up—just some awkward lighting combined with an offhanded comment.

Quote of the Month



PLAYBOY

ENTERTAINMENT FOR MEN

TOMB RAIDER

NELL MCANDREW A.K.A. LARA CROFT NUDE

A FUNNY, FUNNY INTERVIEW WITH ALBERT BROOKS

AMERICAN PIE'S SHANNON ELIZABETH HOT NEW SEX STAR

PLAYBOY'S WIZARD BROKER SAYS, "MAKE MORE MONEY NOW"

> **'If ever I sat on any seats to do a signing, I'd leave a big wet spot.'**
>
> **–Nell McAndrews, former Lara Croft model and August PLAYBOY covergirl, explaining to ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY the perils of sweating in a skintight latex costume.**

Four More From Square

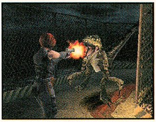
Square recently confirmed that four more titles will be coming to the U.S. Due here in the first quarter of 2000 is Vagrant Story, which Square describes as a fantasy mix of Metal Gear Solid and Resident Evil. Also slated for sometime in 2000 are Legend of Mana, Dew Prism and Chrono Cross. (For more info on Chrono Cross and Vagrant Story, check out this month's International Previews.)

What's more, reports out of Japan are suggesting that the original 16-bit Chrono Trigger will find its way to the PlayStation (although there's no indication of whether it'll make its way here). Plus, Square has indicated it may be working on a music title similar to Konami's Dance Dance Revolution.

Legend of Mana

Dew Prism

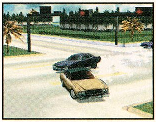
Top 10



Japan's Top 10-Selling PlayStation Games

July sales rankings courtesy of *The PlayStation Magazine Weekly*, SOFTBANK:

1. **Dino Crisis** Capcom – Adventure
2. **Ape Escape** Sony CEI – Action
3. **Fire Pro Wrestling** Human – Action
4. **Dance Dance Revolution** Konami – Misc.
5. **Persona 2** Atlus – RPG
6. **Cielgris Fantasm** Gast – RPG
7. **Grandia** GameArts – RPG
8. **Metal Gear Solid Integral** Konami – Adv.
9. **Simple 1500 Series Vol. 10: The Billiards** Culture Publishers – Sports
10. **Tondemo Crisis** Tokuma Shoten – Misc.

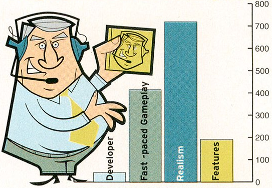


U.K.'s Top 10-Selling PlayStation Games

July sales rankings courtesy of ChartTrack:

1. **Driver** GT Interactive – Action
2. **Dungeon Keeper II** Bullfrog/EA – Strategy
3. **FA Manager** Eidos – Sports
4. **Metal Gear Solid** Konami – Adventure
5. **Tomb Raider III** Eidos – Adventure
6. **Bugs Bunny Lost in Time** Infogrames – Action
7. **Brian Lara Cricket** Codemasters – Sports
8. **FIFA '99** EA – Sports
9. **Anna Kournikova Smash Court Tennis** Namco/Sony – Sports
10. **Street Fighter Alpha 3** Virgin – Fighting

What's most important in a PlayStation football game?



total number of votes: 1,367 poll taken by videogames.com

illustration by Chip Wass

The Breeding Frenzy Continues:

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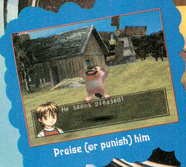

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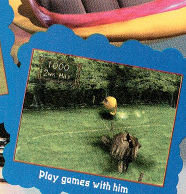

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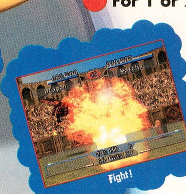

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Top 20

The best-selling U.S. PlayStation titles as reported by the nation's top retailers

1 Lunar: Silver Star Story ●●●●◐

Publisher: Working Designs **Last Month:** – **Genre:** RPG **Release Date:** June 1999

Whether it's the incredible packaging effort, or the classic 2D RPG therein, something about Lunar: SSS has fans purchasing it in droves.

2 Syphon Filter ●●●●○

Publisher: 989 **Last Month:** 2 **Genre:** Action **Release Date:** Feb. 1999

Gabe and Company's lockdown of the Top Five continues, holding steady at Number Deux. What is a "syphon filter," anyhow?

3 WWF Warzone ●●●●○

Publisher: Acclaim **Last Month:** - **Genre:** Sports **Release Date:** July 1998

There's no doubt that the excitement over the forthcoming WWF Attitude has translated into additional sales for this Acclaim hit.

4 Triple Play 2000 ●●●●◐

Publisher: EA **Last Month:** 4 **Genre:** Sports **Release Date:** April 1999

Fortunately, video game umpires don't go on strike, and hence, there's no complaint to be heard from players of this year's top baseball title.

5 Ridge Racer Type 4 ●●●●○

Publisher: Namco **Last Month:** 1 **Genre:** Racing **Release Date:** May 1999

Taking a slight drop out of the top seat to No. 5, Namco's spectacular driving title still manages to pull down the big numbers.

	Title	Rating	Publisher	Last Month	Release Date
6	**Need For Speed: High Stakes**	●●●●◐	EA	3	March 1999
7	**MLB 2000**	●●●●○	EA	6	March 1999
8	**Star Ocean: Second Story**	●●●●◐	SCEA	-	June 1999
9	**Namco Museum Vol. 1**	●●●◐○	Square/EA	13	Aug. 1996
10	**Bloody Roar 2**	●●●●○	SCEA	-	June 1999
11	**Frogger**	●●◐○○	Hasbro	12	Oct. 1997
12	**Army Men 3D**	●●●○○	3DO	8	April 1999
13	**Namco Museum Vol. 3**	●●●◐○	Namco	10	Feb. 1997
14	**Gran Turismo**	●●●●●	SCEA	11	May 1999
15	**Need for Speed III: Hot Pursuit**	●●●●○	EA	-	Mar. 1998
16	**Crash Bandicoot II**	●●●●○	SCEA	19	Oct. 1997
17	**3Xtreme**	●○○○○	989 Studios	7	April 1999
18	**Tomb Raider II**	●●●●◐	Eidos	16	Nov. 1997
19	**Street Fighter Alpha 3**	●●●●●	Capcom	4	May 1999
20	**Spyro the Dragon**	●●●●○	SCEA	17	Sept. 1998

namco Presents

Top 10 Most Wanted

As compiled by our attractive, intelligent readers

1. **Final Fantasy VIII** Squall and his band of futuristic Brat Packers are in the minds and hearts of everyone.
2. **Resident Evil 3: Nemesis** That strapping hunk, Tyrant, also has our readers quite lovestruck. He's too dreamy!
3. **WWF Attitude** Sweaty, burly men in tight underwear fill your gaming fantasies this month. Oh, behave!
4. **Tony Hawk's Pro Skater** Thrashmeisters everywhere quiver in anticipation of this top-grade board sim.
5. **Dino Crisis** It's DINO-mite! <silence> ... Please kill me. Now.
6. **Grandia** Everyone who voted for this Game Arts classic gets a gold star from teacher. Brah-vo!
7. **Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver** At long last, Crystal D's gothic magnum opus may see the light of, uh, day.
8. **Um Jammer Lammy** If we knew what the term "Kafkaesque" meant, we'd use it to describe this game.
9. **NFL Blitz 2000** More burly, sweaty men in tight clothing. We think you should all see the school counselor.
10. **WCW Mayhem** Ah, we give up. We love the big lugs, too. Group hug, everyone!

Lemuel Velez's Top 5

Our monthly contest winner's top five picks

1. **Resident Evil 3: Nemesis** The belligerent, bloodthirsty undead can't keep ol' Lem away.
2. **Star Wars: Episode 1** Neither can Jar Jar Binks, apparently. The Force is truly with this one.
3. **Dino Crisis** Or ravenous velociraptors. Lem's bravado is a shining beacon to us all.
4. **WWF Attitude** Tangling with The Rock is where we draw the line. You're on your own, pal.
5. **Um Jammer Lammy** A cute little lamb. Yeah. Now we're speakin' the same language.

Editors' Top 5

What we've been playing instead of working

1. **WWF Attitude** Imagine the *OPM* staff, only polygonal. And a lot more ripped. Mmm, Create-A-Wrestler.
2. **Final Fantasy VIII** We're playing it and you aren't. Feel free to hate us - it only makes us stronger.
3. **Metal Gear Solid VR Missions** Over 300 virtual levels test our mad stealth skills.
4. **Pepsiman** Mark's fetish for esoteric Japanese games is infectious. Pepsi-man! Pepsi-man!
5. **Intern Boy** It's not what you think. Honest. Skip'd slap you silly if he knew what you were thinking.

Send your votes for the Readers' 10 Most Wanted games to: *Official PlayStation Magazine* Attn: Readers' 10 Most Wanted, P.O. Box 3338, Oak Brook, IL 60522-3338 or e-mail us at: dan_peluso@zd.com or visit the *OPM* section on www.videogames.com

Source: NPD TRSTS Video Games, June 1999. Call them at (516) 625-2345 for questions about this list. Note: No games for competing console systems (e.g., N64, Sega Saturn, etc.) were included. Overall sales figures may vary. Game descriptions are written by the *OPM* staff.

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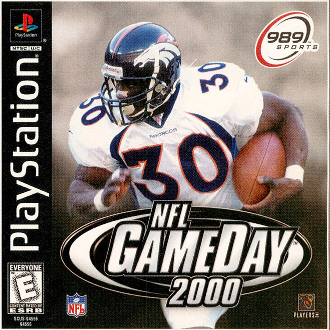
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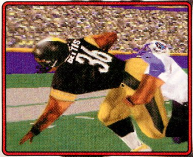

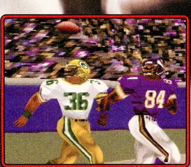

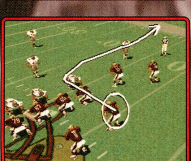

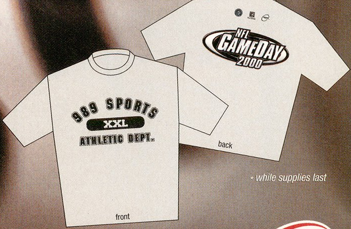
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8 OUT OF 9 DO IT THROUGH CROSSHAIRS.

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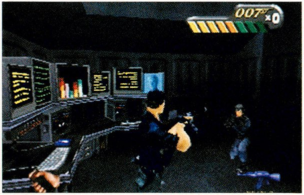

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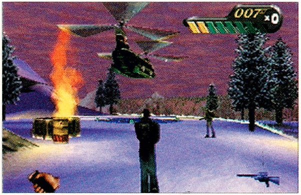

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Prima Strategy Guide Available

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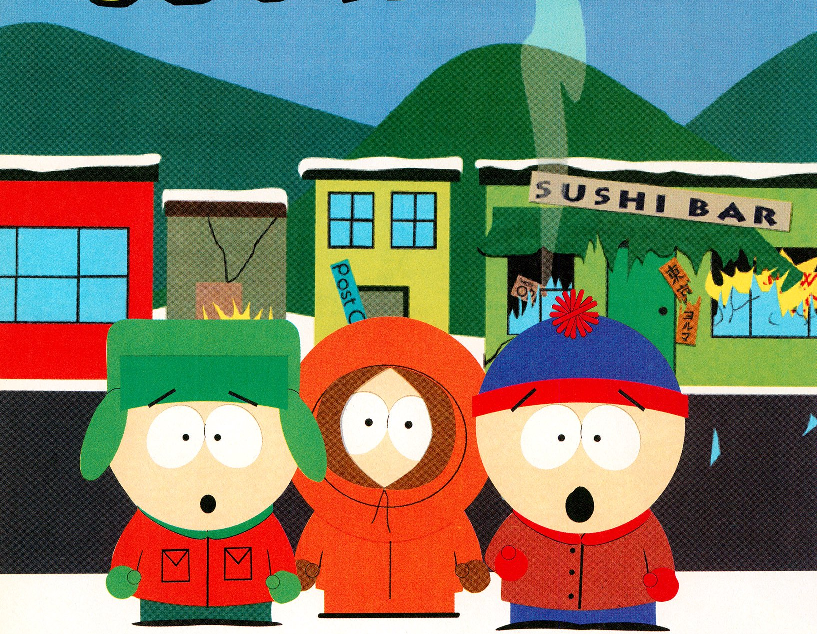

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WARNING

This game is recommended for mature audiences only. It contains adult language and content.

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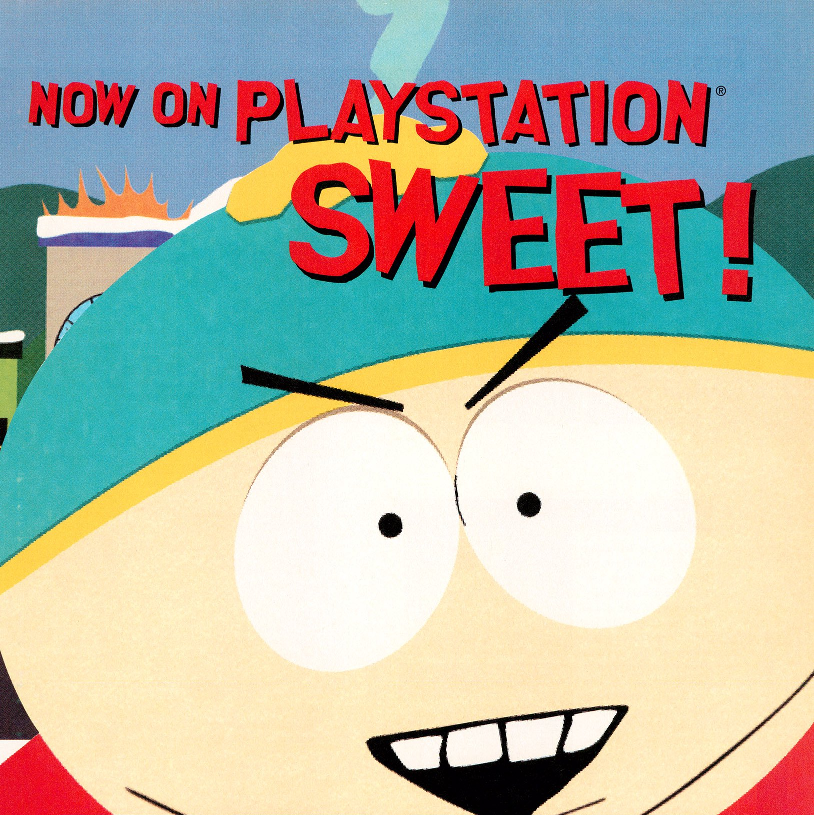
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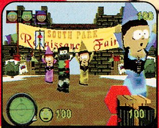
SOUTH PARK
Renaissance Fair
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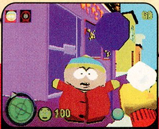
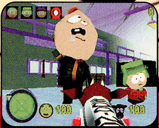
100

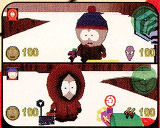
Dozens of sweet environments without any lame, tree-hugging hippies!



He's not Fat–
He's 3-Dimensional!



With this new Cow-Launcher, people will really respect your AUTHORI-TAH!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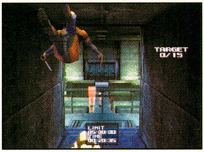
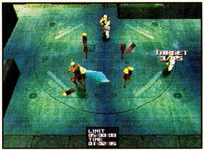
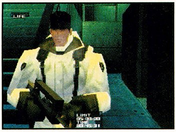
Theme: Action
# of Players: 1
Availability: October
Developer: KCE Japan
Publisher: Konami
URL: www.konami.com

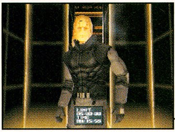


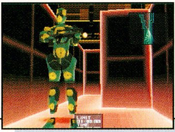


Metal Gear Solid:

Solid Snake returns in a big batch of new and unique training missions







What's this? Snake in a guard's uniform? Liquid Snake in sneaking gear? And some kind of new cyborg super-guard? Things are not always what they seem in the MGS: VR Missions.

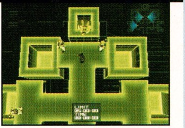
No, it's not a true sequel to Konami's blockbuster espionage adventure game (we'll probably have to wait for the PlayStation 2 to see that), and it's not a "Director's Cut"-style rerelease, but more like something in between. Metal Gear Solid: VR Missions is basically a collection of mini-games and experiments in level and gameplay design that use the same basic format as the training missions from the original game, then mix everything up a bit.

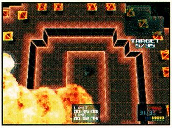
When you first start VR Missions, only a handful of levels are available—mostly the same stages that were included in the VR training from the first game, with a few adjustments. The goal of these stages will be familiar to fans of the original MGS—just sneak past the guards as fast as you can without being noticed. But then VR Missions takes it up a notch. For each set of levels you complete, more and more become available, until you have over 300 to choose from (although that includes some of the same levels in Time Attack mode). There are levels you can only complete with certain weapons, levels where you have to kill a set number of enemies, levels where you kill as many enemies as possible in a set amount of time, puzzle levels, mystery levels, levels you can play as the Ninja, levels, levels, levels!

Filling up all these levels, in addition to old standbys like the arctic guards and security cameras, are a new type of target introduced for the VR Missions—crystals. These hovering

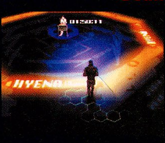
Puzzle Mode

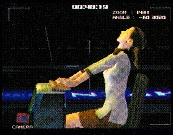
It's not exactly Tetris, but the puzzle levels in VR Missions have their own style of brain-teasing fun. At the start of each of the 10 puzzle stages you are given a new objective—destroy all the crystals within a certain amount of time, knock guards into certain spots without being noticed, raise a group of columns by tossing grenades from above—then it's up to you to figure out how, and often how quickly, you can get it done.





Stalkeratzi





Stalkers and peepers rejoice! Your favorite pastime has finally made it to the PlayStation in the form of the VR Mission's Photography mode. Using your saved game from the full Metal Gear game, you get access to an animated model of Mei Ling or Dr. Naomi Hunter to snap as many pics of as your memory card can hold. The better your rating from MGS, the closer you can get to them, so you better dig out your old copy of the original game if you want that BIG BOSS rating. Watch from any angle you like for two minutes as they sigh, cross their legs and yawn. So realistic if you listen closely you can almost hear the judge issuing a restraining order.

LIFE
TARGET

The Ninja

The sole reason many people will play VR Missions, and with good reason—playing as the ninja simply kicks ass. He has two different sword swipes, his own choke hold (where he grabs the guard from behind and slits his throat), stealth and electric shock, and can even jump! He only has three levels but they rock!

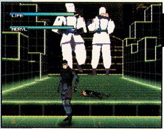
VR Missions

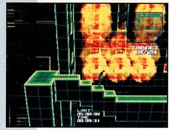
300

Number of levels included in Metal Gear Solid: VR Missions

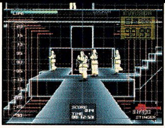
diamonds come in two forms: green (which just shatter when you hit them) and red (which explode on impact). The game makes good use of this new enemy; its simple shape means there can be tons of them on screen at the same time, swarming randomly or in set patterns, and the explosive nature of the red crystals leads to some great chain reaction-type puzzles.

Of course, VR Missions lacks one thing that made the original Metal Gear Solid so great—its gripping story line. But with the same great graphics, precise controls, and even greater focus on various aspects of the gameplay, you shouldn't miss it too much. And for a lower price (around 40 bucks) that doesn't sound like a bad deal for the hundreds of thousands of MGS fans.





1 Minute Battle



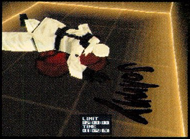
For the busy, on-the-go-gamer who doesn't have time to waste sneaking around or solving puzzles; just grab any weapon and blast through as many targets or guards (your choice) as you can in 60 seconds!

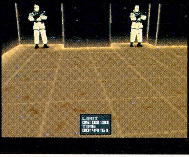
Variety Mode

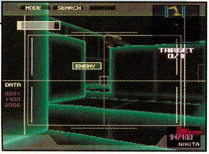
Like its name suggests, Variety mode is a hodgepodge of different levels that don't fit neatly into any one category. Here you have to do things like stop five-story tall guards with a rocket launcher, or snipe a crystal without hitting any guards walking around it.

Mystery Mode

The most original part of the VR Missions would have to be the 10 mystery levels. In each one, a guard has been killed and it's your job to find clues and choose which of three other guards is guilty. For example, in one level you find a pair of broken glasses next to the corpse—figure out which guard has bad eyesight and you have your man. Another mission you need to trace footprints from the scene of the crime to the killer before the snow covers them up. Elementary, my dear Snake.







Weapons Mode

Take on five levels for each of the eight weapons from Metal Gear Solid (SOCOM pistol, C4 explosives, FAMAS automatic rifle, grenades, Claymore mines, Nikita and Stinger missile launchers, and the PSGI sniper rifle, in case you have forgotten any). Each level is specifically tailored to the weapon you choose and believe us, they get pretty damn tough. Once you think you have mastered these levels you can try them again in Time Attack mode and see if you can beat the records.

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ROCK STAR
IN TOWN

Um Jammer LAMMY™

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GOOD
BAD
AWFUL
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GOOD
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EVERYONE
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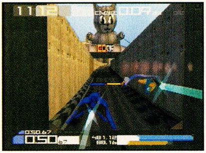
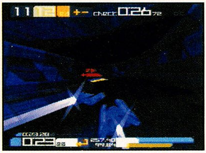
www.playstation.com

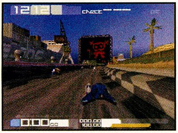
Theme: Racing
# of Players: 2
Availability: Winter 1999
Developer: Psygnosis
Publisher: Psygnosis
URL: www.psygnosis.com

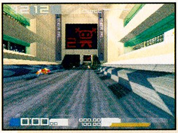


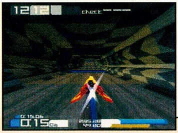


WipeOut 3

The stylish hover-racer that started it all gets a fresh update

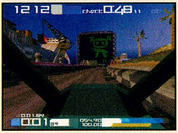


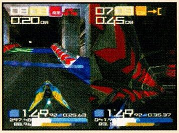


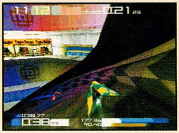


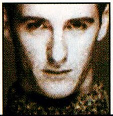
12 The number of weapons in WipeOut 3's impressive arsenal.

Futuristic racing games and glyph-like fonts are as inseparable as peanut butter and chocolate. Right: New to the series are a cockpit view and two-player split-screen racing.









Those some fly mutha beats!

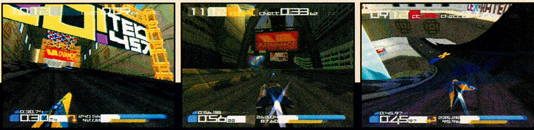
Like the first two titles in the series, WipeOut 3 will have a stellar licensed soundtrack. But the third WipeOut title is taking a different approach to acquiring music: The entire soundtrack has been placed under the musical direction of DJ Sasha. Sasha will produce five exclusive music tracks for the game; additionally, he will work with international artists such as Chemical Brothers, Underworld, Propellerheads, Orbital and Paul Van Dyk on the project. Sasha's goal as musical director is to choose tracks that "form part of an overall score," ensuring that the soundtrack not only kicks ass but has a consistent sound and tone to boot.

The PlayStation has seen its share of racing games, but the WipeOut series has always stood apart from the rest. The futuristic racing craft and tight gameplay mechanics mesh perfectly with the cutting-edge art direction, silicon-melting graphics and the hottest licensed soundtrack around. Finally answering the pleas of Anti-Gravity racing addicts around the globe, Psygnosis is bringing a third WipeOut title to the Sony PlayStation. Fortunately, Psygnosis has taken the time to significantly enhance this already strong franchise.

The most notable change comes in the ships' control. The new, smooth Dual Shock analog support complements a pair of airbrakes and the ability to sacrifice energy for a temporary hyperthrust. The cars have more of a "hovering" feel than ever before. This increase in control is matched by an increase in track complexity: With 90-degree turns, huge jumps and awesome spirals and twists, each of the eight tracks is sure to sufficiently challenge all racers.

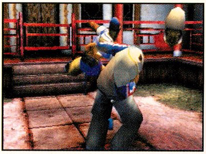
All of these tracks blitzkrieg the player in a fantastic new hi-resolution mode. Seven new weapons join five holdovers from WipeOut XL, and the game has been rebalanced to include more defensive strategies. Anyone unfortunate enough to have been targeted by an inescapable homing missile will appreciate this change. WipeOut XL's five racing teams are joined by three newcomers, and the new Tournament mode brings these teams to the forefront, pitting racers against very specific pilots for their respective teams. Psygnosis has spent a lot of time further developing the world and "personality" of WipeOut with cult team Designers Republic. All the tracks are set in the same fictional city, and teams and characters have been brought to the forefront.

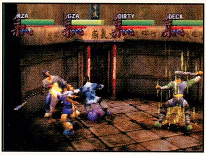
WipeOut 3 also offers gamers the traditional Arcade mode, a Time Trial mode, a Deathmatch "Eliminator" mode and a Challenge mode. Link-cableless fans will be relieved to hear that WipeOut 3 finally introduces a two-player, split-screen racing mode. And it's a good thing, too—judging from what we've seen so far, there's going to be a lot of eager fans lining up to play.



As evinced by the clean, sleek, technophilic look of WipeOut's universe, the future is a place free of litter, graffiti and trailer parks. Only advertisements and redundant racing billboards remain. At night, when the races shut down and the humans return to their homes, the silent killbots of Big Brother sweep the streets clear of all refuse and innocence...we think. Or maybe all that Red Bull has rotted our brains.

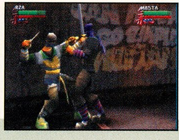
Theme: Fighting
# of Players: 1-4
Availability: September
Developer: Paradox
Publisher: Activision
URL: www.x.com

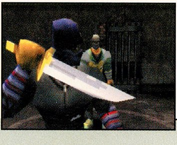


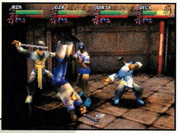


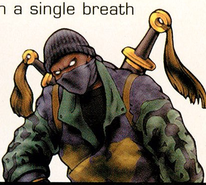
Wu Tang: Shaolin Style

Now you too can bust freestyles and heads in a single breath









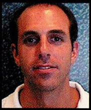
Movie licenses are a dime a dozen, but it's not often we are treated to a game revolving around a rap group. In fact, the hip hop nation hasn't appeared this prominently since Rap Jam on the Super Nintendo. Wu-Tang: Shaolin Style follows the members of the Clan as they fight their way from the streets of New York all the way to ancient China.

Along the way they learn important techniques like combos and fatality kills which they'll need when facing their nine alter egos. Of course, all the members of the Wu-tang are selectable like Raekwon, Ghost Face Killah, GZA, RZA, Method man and perennial favorite Old Dirty Bastard. Since you start in the big apple, the backgrounds will at first be grimy streets and alleyways which will give way to Chinatown-like environments. Eventually the Clan will make it to the courtyards and temples of China with in-game cinematics explaining the ongoing story. Although that sounds fairly linear, the story mode allows for branching stories and paths. The game also allows the normal one-on-one match ups, and has three- and four-player support making it one of the first multiplayer fighters to be released.

Fans who mourned the loss of Thrill Kill will be glad to know that Wu-Tang uses many of the same elements from that engine, although they have been considerably tweaked.

Just as Michael Jackson lent his top hits to his Moonwalker game, the Wu have also contributed their songs and have even gone a step further. Three new songs were created exclusively for this game making this the only new output (as a whole) for 1999. Look for Wu-Tang: Shaolin Style this fall.

Adam Goldberg, Wu Producer Speaks



OPM: Who came up with the idea? Activision or the Wu-Tang?
AG: The Wu-Tang Clan approached us with the idea to make a game. From there, we collaborated and formed the concept itself then selected Paradox who created a comprehensive design that encompasses our concept.

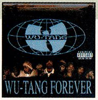
OPM: How involved have the Wu-Tang Clan been during the development of the game?
AG: Very involved. Since Wu-Tang has in many ways adopted the sensibilities and styles from Shaolin mythology, they were able to lend us design expertise as it relates to Wu-Tang. For example, we incorporated the 36 Chambers (36 deadly skills) into the game's story. Wu Tang is recording three new songs and beats which we will use to score the game. They have also recorded each of the artists so that each character will feature the artist's real voice in.

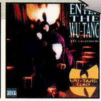
OPM: How much of the engine was salvaged from Thrill Kill and how much of it is new?
AG: Although the game has fundamental similarities to Thrill Kill, everything has been revamped—from the combo system to the graphics. Wu-Tang: Shaolin Style is very fast and fluid and the graphics (including skinned characters) are super clean and vivid.

OPM: Which do you like better: The first Wu-Tang album, 36 Chambers or the newer Wu-Tang Forever?
AG: I could never pick between the two. I like them both for many of the same reasons and I Like them both for many of their differences. I guess it just depends on what mood I'm in.

OPM: Will the new songs featured in the game be released separately in stores?
AG: No. The three full redbook tracks will be fully intact and are available exclusively on the PlayStation disc itself

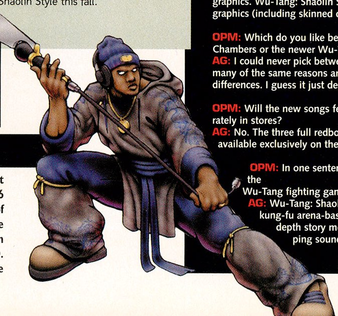
OPM: In one sentence, explain why people should buy the Wu-Tang fighting game.
AG: Wu-Tang: Shaolin Style is a hard-hitting, over-the-top kung-fu arena-based fighting game that features an in-depth story mode, four player capability and a ripping soundtrack.



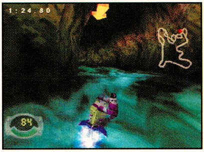


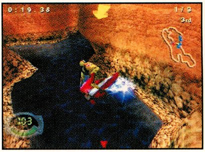
Wu-Discography

The year 1993 marked the official debut of the clan with Enter the Wu-Tang (36 chambers). Virtually every member of the group released solo albums since then leading into their regrouping in 1997 for the Wu-Tang Forever double CD. They are currently in their second wave of solo efforts.



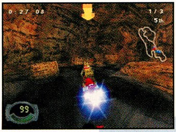
Theme: Racing
# of Players: 1-2
Availability: November
Developer: Pacific Coast Power and Light
Publisher: 989 Studios
URL: www.989studios.com

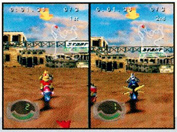


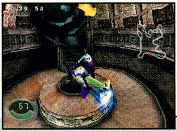


Jet Moto 3

Another Single Trac title gets the 989 makeover







16

16-plus tracks to test the durability of your controller in classic Jet Moto fashion.

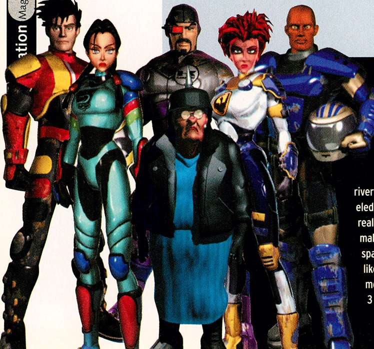
As you can see from the character art below, the Jet Moto series has eschewed its earlier surf-billy comic-book aesthetic sensibilities in favor of the plasticky, CG techno look that's all the rage these days. The same is true of the soundtrack.

Saying 989 Studios has a certain track record for delivering lackluster sequels to venerable PlayStation series is rather like saying that Darryl Strawberry has a record for misusing pharmaceuticals. In both cases, it's a sublime understatement; who can forget what a terrible turn the classic Twisted Metal series took with Part Three? In fact, it's been all about the Terrible Threes with 989-produced sequels: Cool Boarders 3, 3 Xtreme and of course Twisted Metal 3 failed to live up to the high standards set by their earlier installments.

As a result, fledgling development house Pacific Coast Power and Light has a questionable legacy to work against. Hence, they've pulled out all the stops with Jet Moto 3, hoping to deliver a sequel to a series that will capture the manic, high-energy racing action of the first two titles, yet incorporate a superior graphics engine and add some play developments of their own. As of this build, Jet Moto 3 looks set to do just that: Although the number of on-track competitors has been reduced since the previous installations, the tracks are longer and more detailed; with more hidden shortcuts, insane environmental conditions and the most ridiculous air time this side of Rally Cross. Several of your favorite riders return, including the aptly named "Technician" and "Wild Ride," although the design choice has been made to render them in CG, a la Lara Croft, as opposed to the comic book style of the previous two titles. The real-life sponsors, Mountain Dew and Slim Jim, also make a return, as does the infamous grappling technique needed to pass the more advanced tracks.

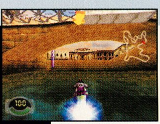
What's new is a spiffy graphics engine that affords more detailed environments and splashier special effects. Although the game sports a few rough edges and clipping errors, it's noticeably more intense (visually) than the previous Jet Moto titles. PCP&L has done an admirable job of capturing the frenetic, on-the-edge feel that so typifies the series. The controls are still a bit rough, but that should be cleaned up in the months before the November release.

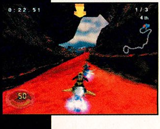
Can the good folk at Pacific Coast Power and Light fend off the dreaded Curse of Three? Will our Moto-riding pals take the trophy of an accomplished sequel, or plummet off into the obscurity of a half-arsed rerun? The answers and more will be revealed in November; until then, all signs point to a happy ending for this cliffhanger.



Change is Good

The most striking change found in Jet Moto 3 over previous installments is in the appearance and detail of the terrain. Gone are the days of fields of blue punctuated with the occasional white apex vaguely resembling a wave, or the static strips of brown representing a river channel. Water effects are now realistically modeled and incorporate translucency effects for superior realism. The terrain itself is also much more complex, making navigation a bit trickier—there are very few spaces where you can let the ol' thumb relax. If you like a hardcore racing experience where the environment is as much your opponent as the AI is, Jet Moto 3 is sure to give you the workout you're looking for.





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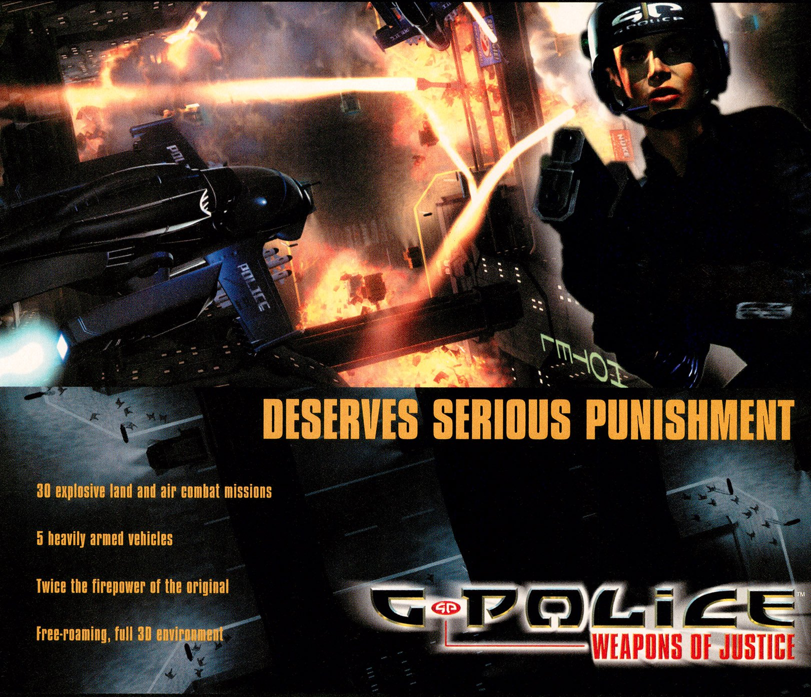

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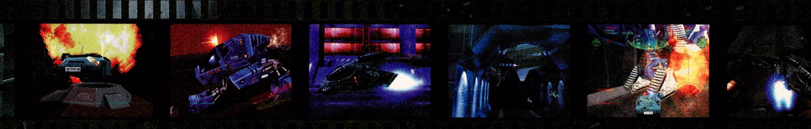

PlayStation

PSYGNOSIS

TEEN T CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

MAXIMUM FIREPOWER : ZERO TOLERANCE

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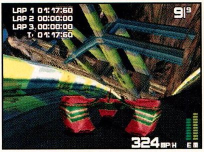
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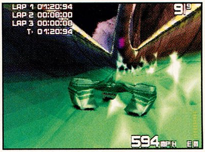
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9 9
594 MPH
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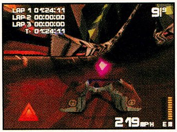
Theme: Racing
# of Players: 2
Availability: Fall
Developer: VCC
Publisher: Crave Entertainment
URL: www.craveyard.com

Mag 3

Racing at the speed of...magnetism?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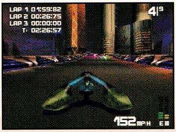
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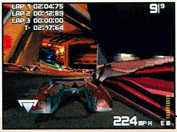
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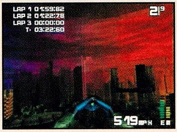
MAG 3

Besides being the name of this game, Mag 3 is also a name for an international forum on chemical treatment. Now you know.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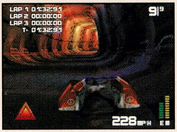
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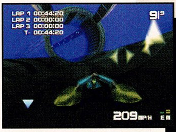
They may look funny, but those tripods are pretty darn fast. Right: Lush environments and wild tracks are a defining characteristic of Mag 3 racing.

Everybody knows that, in the future, cars will fly, lifted above terra firma on invisible wings of electromagnetism or antigravity. This wheel-free vision of the future, where we are no longer constrained by the nature of geography, is one that has gone largely unquestioned, and is probably the most omnipresent symbol of futurism. As a result, our high-tech racing games often feature cars levitating above the track, bound no more to flat ovals and earthly speeds but only to the wild loops and spirals of our imaginations.

Or something like that. Pretentious parallels to the human spirit aside, we've always had a fascination with futuristic race cars, and European developer VCC is tapping into it with their forthcoming title Mag 3. Featuring "tripods" (read: cars) that ride on electromagnetic currents and achieve ridiculously high speeds, Mag 3 also sports some of the most mindbendingly crazy tracks this side of an M.C. Escher nightmare.

Graphically, the game is all about high frame rates and European aesthetic sensibility, a la the Designer's Republic look of another popular European wheelless racer. The tripods themselves (which look like the result of mating a Japanese sportster with a catamaran) are a little tricky to become visually accustomed to, but as soon as you hit that first big loop at 600 kph, their unusual appearance is soon forgotten.

Every racing game has a gimmick to distinguish itself from the vast milieu of mediocre racers out there, and Mag 3's is the "Magnet" button. This technique allows the car to accelerate and stick to surfaces which would normally incur a violent plummeting death, such as the ceilings of tunnels and the gut-twistingly vertical dropoffs. The best speeds and times will only be netted by those who have mastered the magnet. Are you up to the task?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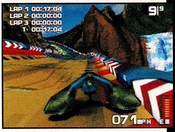
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Psychology 101

The more astute literary types out there in Readerland may have contemplated the complex psychological issues and subconscious desires that manifest during video game development. In an effort to subvert people like that and make ourselves sound really smart, here, then, is OPM's Top Five Freudian Explanations for Racing Game Cliches:

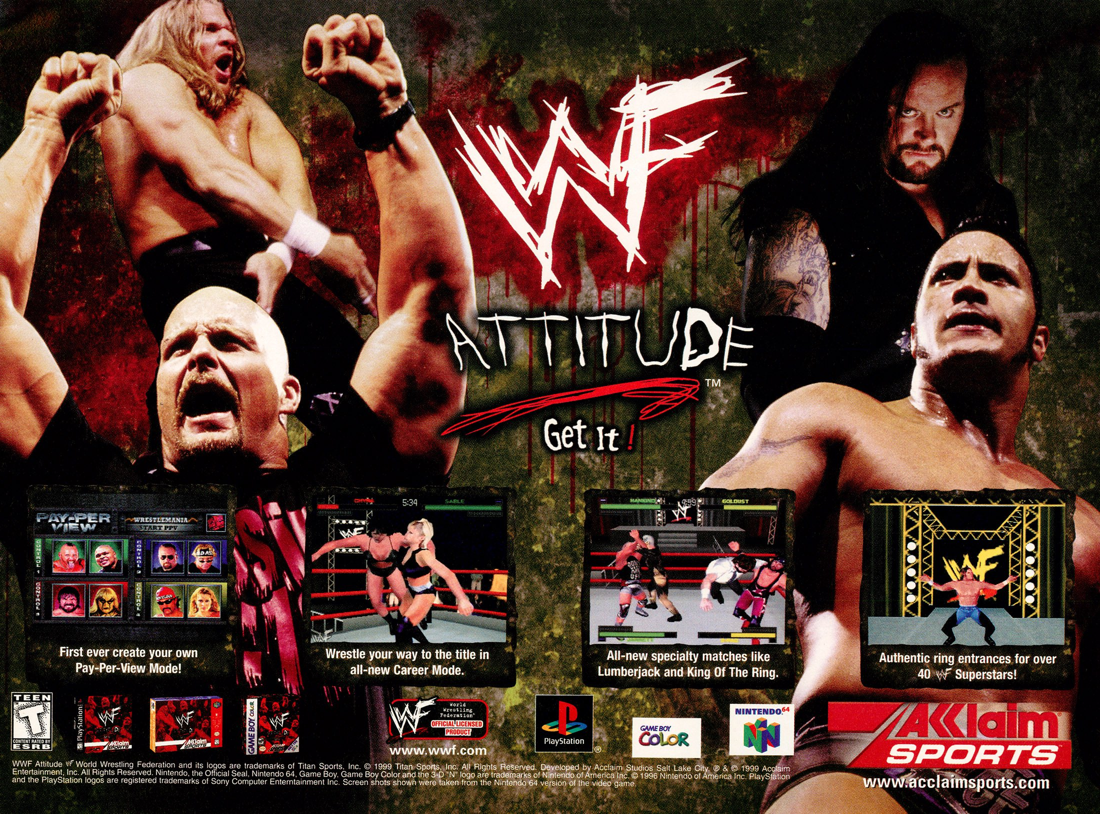
#5 Levitating Cars: A hatred for the conformist attitudes of the middle class (as represented by the road) is evident. The developers were beat up a lot in grade school.

#4 Missile Launchers: Issues of masculinity and possible misogyny are vented through the use of a potent male symbol. The developers are in desperate need of Viagra.

#3 Secret Routes: A strong desire to resist the deterministic nature of industrial society and follow Robert Frost's "road less travelled." The developers like to wear women's underwear.

#2 Big Jumps: A feeling of vertigo and nihilism is present, stemming from the paranoiac belief that one's life is out of control. The developers are worried that the tin foil on their heads isn't blocking NATO's mind control rays.

#1 Car Customization: The need to nurture and be nurtured is manifest. The developers are in love with their mothers.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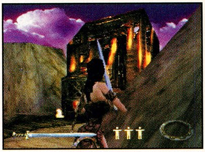
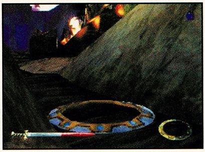
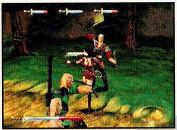


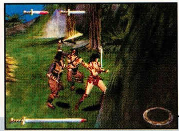


Theme: Action
# of Players: 1
Availability: Fall
Developer: Universal Interactive Studios
Publisher: Electronic Arts
URL: www.ea.com

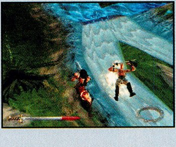
Xena: Warrior Princess

Administer an old-school feminist beatdown, Xena-style





Above right: The patented ChakramCam (tm) in action. Left: Xena may find her bad self confronted by several nasties at once.



20

There's 20 (plus a few secret) levels filled with enemies for our favorite medieval feminist icon to gratuitously unman with a well-timed knee to the jewels.

"Xena," boasts the press document included with our previewable copy of the game, "is the No. 1 syndicated action-hour among teens, aged 12-17." That's not surprising; teenaged guys are to leather lingerie and big bosoms what teenaged girls are to weak-chinned femme-boys and wailing ballads of eternal love. It's no big shocker, either, that Universal Studios decided to commission a game based on the popular medieval riot grrl and her eponymous series; the big surprise is that it's a well-designed game.

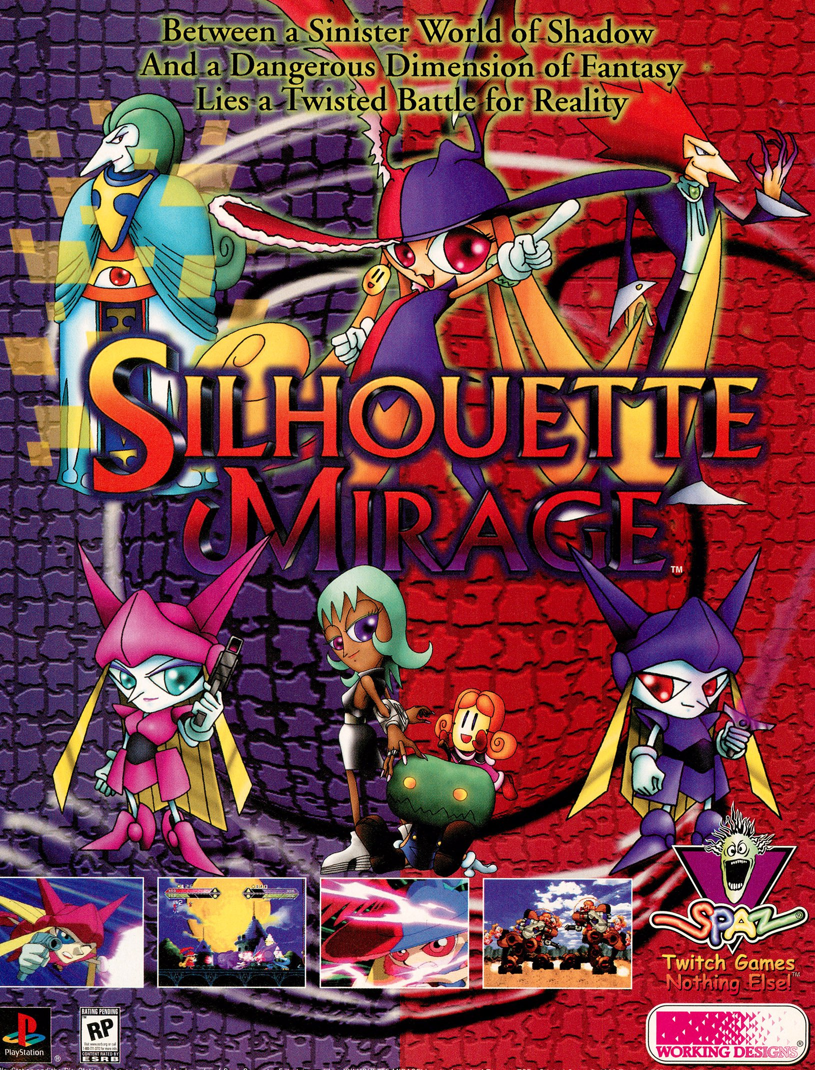
In Xena: Warrior Princess, you'll get the opportunity to play as the sword-slinging, chakram-chucking uberwoman as she searches for her kidnapped companion, Gabrielle, over 20 detailed levels. As you progress, you'll do battle with more than mere mortals—many monsters, including golems, dragons and medusae will attempt to impede the busty swordsmistress on her path to rescue her friend and lay low the plans of the evil King Valarian.

What will capture the attention of game players is the solid fighting techniques, which feel like a more fleshed-out version of the battle engine seen in the classic N64 title Zelda: Ocarina of Time. Multiple combat maneuvers and combinations are readily available, and a behind-the-chakram camera adds that B-movie cinematic touch to ranged attacks, as well as making aiming easier. While very linear, the game incorporates some devious puzzle solving along with the full-course helping of swordplay. Fans of the series will obviously delight in the slickly produced re-creation of Xena's fighting style, and appreciate the many cameos and in-jokes taken directly from the show itself.

So far, it looks like Universal Studios has learned a thing or two about licensed games. Xena: Warrior Princess appears to be a fairly original action game that just happens to have a popular license affixed to it, rather than vice-versa. Sharpen your swords, Xena fans, and get ready for a game, as well as a heroine, of mythic proportions.

The REAL Ambiguously Gay Duo

You KNOW there's something funny going on when a TV show has an entire USENET newsgroup devoted to the possibly homoerotic subtext quivering beneath the surface of its campy veneer. Yet the debate rages: is Xena a bonafide lesbian or is it just a fantasy conjured up by testosterone-crazed teenboys? Are Xena's meaningfully spiritual discussions and bathtime escapades with long-time sidekick and possible paramour Gabrielle the behavior of close female friends or is there something more-than-Freudian at work behind the scenes? One thing's for sure: This game isn't gonna make it any clearer. And if it does, we aren't going to tell YOU the codes, perv boy!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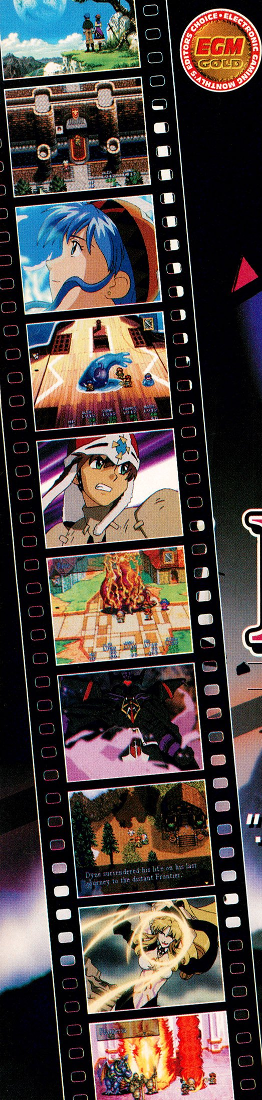
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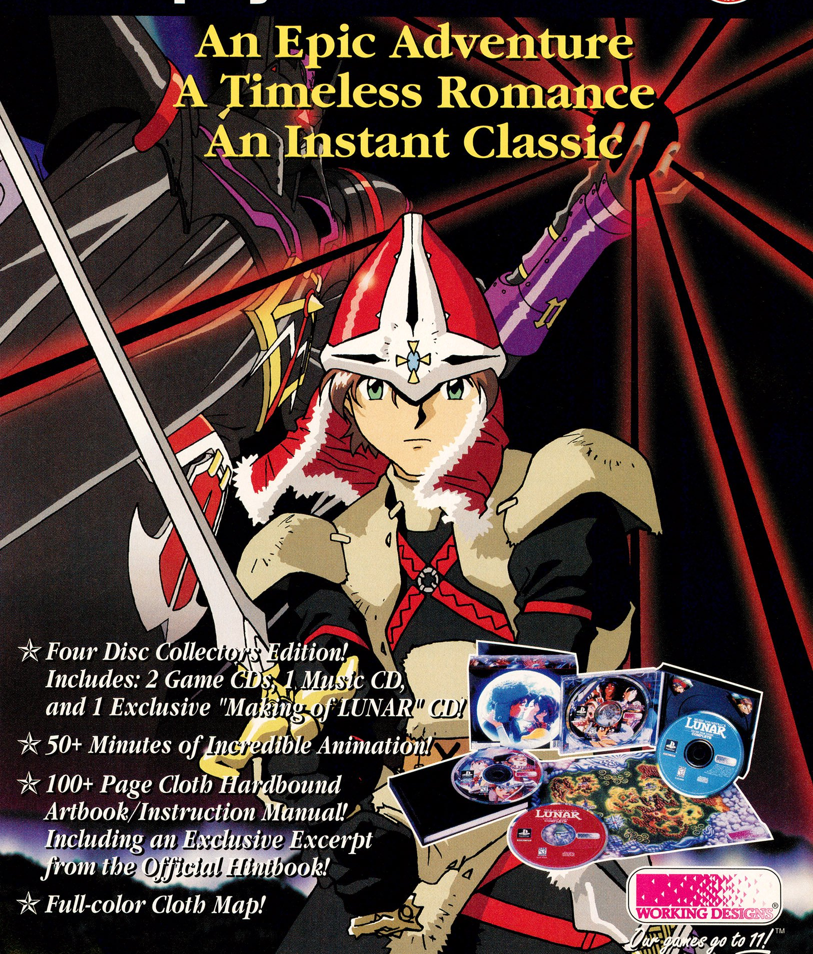
A Timeless Romance
An Instant Classic



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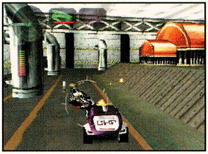
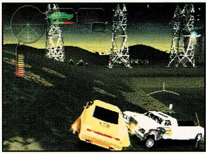
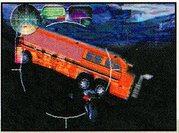


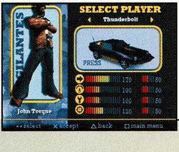


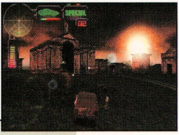
Theme: Action
# of Players: 1-2
Availability: October
Developer: Luxoflux Corp
Publisher: Activision
URL: www.activision.com

Vigilante 8: Second Offense

I'm jus' talkin' 'bout Luxoflux, man!







Top left: You will learn to fear the badge. Far left: School bussing issues in the 1970s were less about segregation and more about psychotic Japanese chicks from the future riddling the big yellow buggers with depleted uranium. Good thing we have John Torque to protect the kids.

Cars, big guns and the '70s. Ever since Steve McQueen showed us how to properly abuse a vehicle in 1968's *Bullitt* (and later in 1972's *The Getaway*), those three particular subjects have frequently been associated. The gun-toting, hard-driving antics of Richard Roundtree and Clint Eastwood gave us all the working definition of "bad ass." Now, we all want to be rock-hard tough guys behind the wheel. Give us a little funk and a whole lotta firepower, and we're good to go, baby.

Hey, the whole cars/guns/'70s thing worked for Luxoflux's previous release, Vigilante 8, and they're set to follow it up with an official sequel, the appropriately titled Vigilante 8: Second Offense. Fortunately for fans of the fledgling automobile combat genre, it's more of the same, and we do mean more: more cars (18), more funkalicious drivers, bigger environments, and more gameplay modes than you can shake a bottle of Jeri-Curl at. New vehicles ready to ride loco include a motor home driven by crazed cultists and a couple sets of wheels from the near future. With the proper power-ups, vehicles can exchange their treads for propellers and skiffs, allowing them to hover in the air or race across water surfaces. Now that's just groovy, man.

The graphics engine itself isn't vastly improved; the majority of the programming effort has gone into increasing the arenas and adding the vast wealth of new features and play techniques. The Arcade mode lets you pick your opponents and set up battles, and the Quest mode lets your earn points for future vehicle upgrades, which can be saved for later competition. New multiplayer modes, including co-op settings, round this bad boy out into a full-featured sequel sure to deliver maximum bang for the buck.

The heat is on this October when V8: Second Offense roars its way onto shelves.

That '70s Show

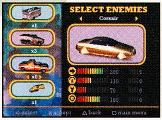
We all know that '70s badboy cop movies make great fodder for video games. But what about other cultural icons from the era of bell bottoms and disco? Here's a few game ideas to get that mojo rising:

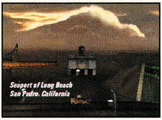
Studio 54: The Reckoning:
Play as '70s punk superstar Sid Vicious as he wages war on the Hollywood elite with just a rocket launcher and a raunchy attitude! Exciting first-person shooting action and disco fever meet in an orgy of bloodshed and really bad hair!

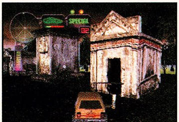
Hanna-Barbera's Animation Studio:
Let your imagination run wild as you attempt to flood TV with cheaply produced, poor-quality animation! Produce the next Jabberjaw using only one matte background, a bad onionskin of Batman and five frames of walking animation! The challenge never ends!

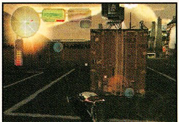
RUSH Vs. Capcom:
Can Geddy Lee's ear-piercing wails and mad bass skills overcome the fearsome wrasslin' techniques of Zangief? Will Alex Lifeson's slick chord changes be enough to stop the Shinkuu Hadouken? Is Neal Peart's drum technique enough to stand against Strider's flashing blade? All the answers, and more, in this potential crossover classic.

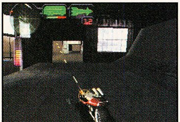
18 **Eighteen vehicles are primed for violence in 12 unique locales. Mmmm. Violence.**



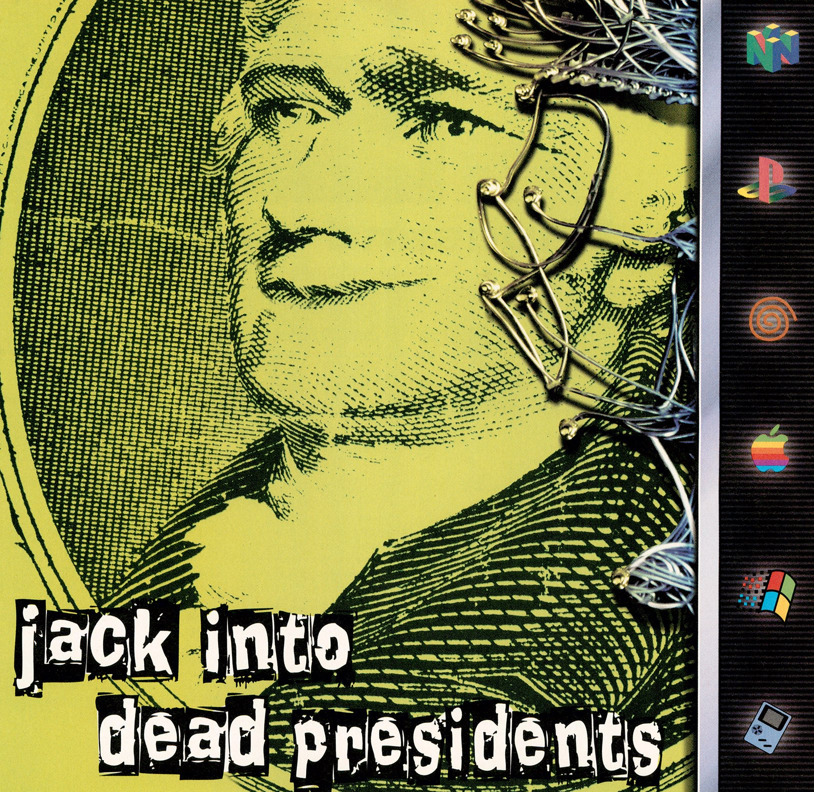








Far left: Take the Family Truckster on a vacation—a vacation of death! Top left: the futuristic Corsair: The Ultimate Prom Ride. Lens flare not included.



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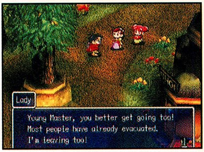
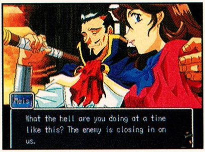
Theme: RPG
# of Players: 1
Availability: August
Developer: Red Company
Publisher: Atlus
URL: www.atlus.com



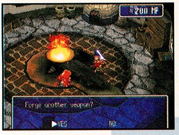
Young Master, you better get going too! Most people have already evacuated. I'm leaving too!



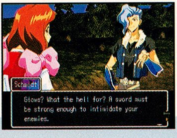
What the hell are you doing at a time like this? The enemy is closing in on us.

Thousand Arms

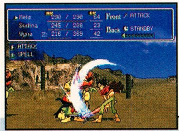
A young blacksmith forges new relationships and saves the world



Forge another weapon?



Glows? What the hell for? A sword must be strong enough to intimidate your enemies.



Thousand Arms' hand-drawn sprites are particularly impressive in battle.

12

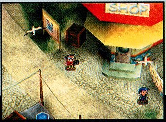
...hours of high-quality, professional English voice acting are audible across two CDs.

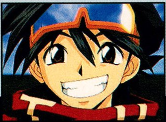
In the world of RPGs, countless new titles are being announced (and subsequently translated) at a breakneck pace, meaning U.S. gamers are seeing more choices hit our shores than ever before. But competition is healthy: Titles like Atlus' Thousand Arms are taking newer and bolder steps to push the traditional RPG experience forward and stand out from the crowd.

Developed by Red Company, the company behind the colorful and timeless Bonk's Adventure, Thousand Arms incorporates an innovative and surprisingly effective graphics engine. Similar to Square's Xenogears, character sprites in the game are hand-drawn and placed upon a 3D polygonal backdrop. Your perspective rotates to face the direction you're moving—a useful feature with the many twists and turns one often takes in RPGs. The story is helped along by close-up anime portraits for key dialog scenes, copious amounts of voice acting, anime/CG movie sequences and original Japanese opening/ending songs by J-pop artist Ayumi Hamasaki.

You star as Meis Triumph, the youngest member of an influential family of blacksmiths which has degenerated from once-noble ideals to endless womanizing. Meis bucks the trend by diligently setting off to save the world after his hometown is attacked by the insidious Dark Acolytes, but still works in ample amounts of flirting during his quest. (Hey, nobody's perfect.) Six other characters eventually join the cause, and thanks to his family trade, Meis can forge more powerful weapons for the party after levels are gained. Depending on the female companion you choose for assistance in forging, weapons may be imbued with a variety of spells and elemental powers. Battles also differ significantly from standard RPG fare—one character is chosen to stand at the forefront of combat to inflict blows and magical attacks, while two characters stand in the background offering backup support with items and stat-enhancing spells. Should the leader fall, one of your companions jumps in to take his or her place.

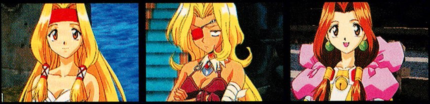
Innovative additions such as weapon forging, plentiful voice acting, and a dating simulator all packed around a solid RPG core may just distinguish Thousand Arms enough from its counterparts and make it a title worth checking out.





You'd be smiling too if you got to date the world's most beautiful women.

So What Are You Doing This Saturday Night?



Much like Red's Sakura Taisen series (only available in Japan), Thousand Arms blends a unique and lighthearted dating simulator into its traditional RPG enclosure—the first dating sim of its kind in the United States. As the flamboyant Meis, you can court up to nine different girls at countless date spots around the world. Avoid the blatantly incorrect responses to questions your date asks ("I like making secret gases in bed," is a bad choice, for example) and your intimacy level will rise, allowing you to gain powerful spells and attacks in battles. While the well-voiced, amorous crooning of Meis' dating partners may not be much of a replacement for the real thing on a Saturday night, the addictive dating element distinguishes Thousand Arms in an expanding field of RPGs.

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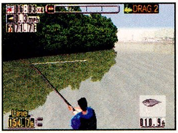
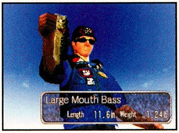
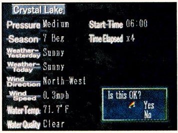
TEEN T CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Bass Landing

Theme: Sports
# of Players: 1
Availability: September
Developer: Agetec
Publisher: Agetec
URL: www.agetec.com



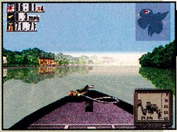

Large Mouth Bass
Length 11.6in Weight 1.24lb

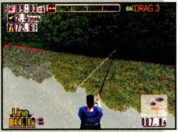

Crystal Lake
Pressure Medium
Season 7 Beg
Weather-Yesterday Sunny
Weather-Today Sunny
Wind Direction North-West
Wind Speed 0.3mph
Water Temp. 71.7°F
Water Quality Clear
Start-Time 06:00
Time Elapsed x4
Is this OK?
Yes
No

Every true fisherman knows that you don't catch a fish every time you throw your lure out in the water. In line with that, Agetec has opted to make their upcoming Bass Landing focus more on the simulation side of fishing. The lunkers won't exactly be jumping into your boat, so you're going to have to learn how to fish intelligently.

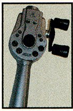
One of the most interesting things about Bass Landing is the degree to which you can customize the game. Weather, water temperature, wind, time of day and water clarity are all variable, and can influence the size of your catch at the end of the day. For inexperienced fishers, there is a tutorial mode to help overcome the learning curve. (Or, check out the barrage of "how-to" fishing shows on Saturday morning TV.)

The game also has five huge lakes to explore, each with its own unique fish population. Your boat is equipped with a fish finder and a trolling motor, and you have 20 different lures to choose from. All this makes your quest for fishing glory all the more easy. Gamers can snare Bass Landing this September.





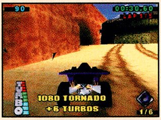
Now all you need is a beer

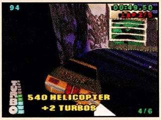


No fishing simulation would be complete without an authentic fishing rod controller. Agetec's "Tsuri-Con" features all the buttons you would find on a standard PlayStation controller, a centered analog stick used for adjusting the angle of the rod, and the rumbling action we all know and love. Fish on!

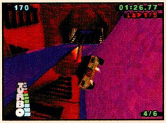
Hot Wheels Turbo Racing

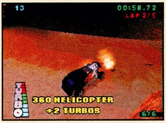
Theme: Racing
# of Players: 1-2
Availability: September
Developer: Stormfront Studios
Publisher: Electronic Arts
URL: http://www.ea.com/





One has to give Stormfront Studios and Electronic Arts props for not wimping out with the Hot Wheels license and producing another "me too" title for the congested PlayStation racing genre. After all, Hot Wheels are classic toys, and putting them in a casual arcade-style racing game would be like putting Barbie in the projects or using Legos to build atomic diagrams of acetylene molecules—it just isn't what the toys are all about, man! Hot Wheels are about taking a length of track with two rubber band-powered launchers, and blasting Purple Passion at The Mongoose until their little die-cast doors fall off. They're about doing ridiculous things with brightly painted models of classic vehicles; and that's the spirit Stormfront Studios has set out to capture.



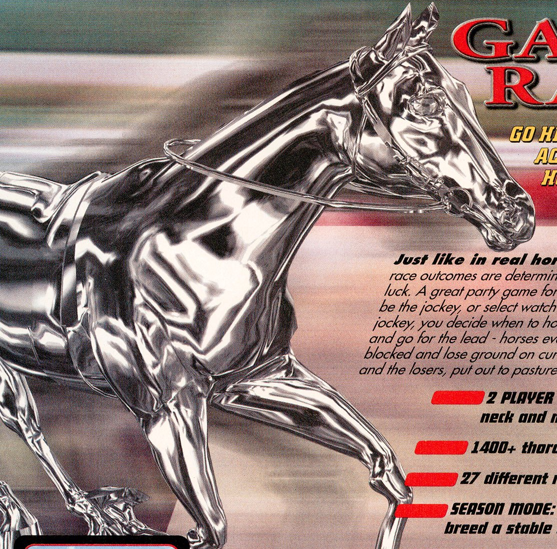


It should come as no surprise, then, that this game is absolutely insane, as racers go. Take every major "extreme" racing cliché, such as loops and jumps, and magnify them by a factor of 10, and you have a sense of the racing environments in Hot Wheels Turbo Racing. Imagine roaring down a narrow strip of red track in a desert environment, only to bust through a mine entrance, fall 50 feet, skirt along a narrow railway high above the track, tear into a loop, and then plummet another 50 feet, all at a breakneck pace. Whew! Fortunately, the play engine is up to the task, and the controls are quite forgiving, allowing you to navigate even the most ridiculous of paths with apparent ease. Turbo boosts are awarded for doing tricks in the air, which can be used to increase your Turbo meter and send you rocketing headlong into high-speed, gravity-bending victory.

With a few tweaks to the graphic engine and a little overall polish, Hot Wheels Turbo Racing could be one of the more unique racing games available this season.

Feel the Power, Feel the Pounding, Feel the Speed...

Feel the GLORY



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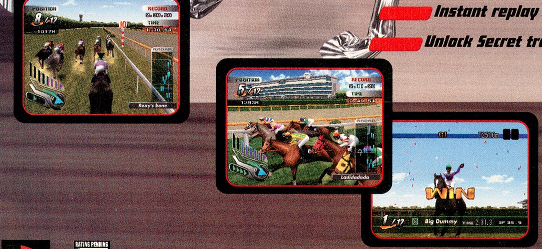
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1017M
RADAR
Roxy's bone
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5/12
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TIME 0.49.54
1393M
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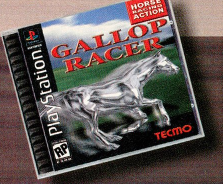
WIN
1/12
Big Dummy
TIME 2.31.3
3F 35.9


HORSE RACING ACTION
GALLOP RACER
PlayStation
RP
ESRB
TECMO

PlayStation

RATING PENDING
RP
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

DUAL SHOCK

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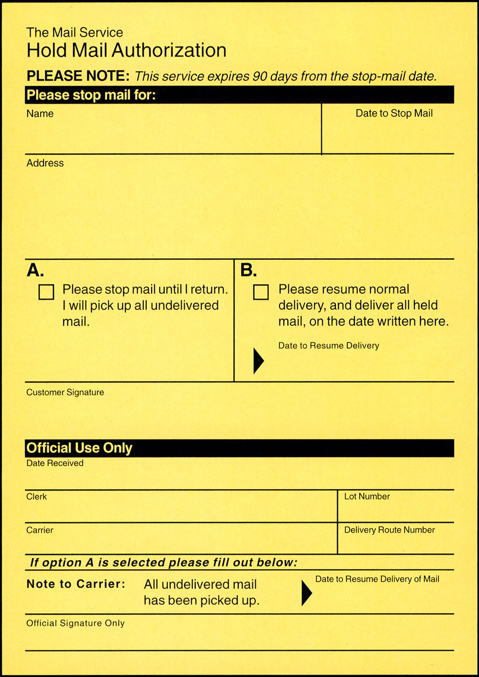

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STAR OCEAN
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Too bad there's no "indefinite date" box to check on those post office forms. Since you have no idea when you'll be returning. Everything you do in this game will have an impact on the way the journey ends. If it ever does.

You start on a quest that begins at the edge of the universe. And ends – well, that's entirely up to you. Every single person you meet, every step and every decision you make will ultimately shape your destiny. And the fate of a planet.

In short, the maniacal gods are poised to kill every single living creature with a great meteorite that is quickly and furiously hurtling straight for your planet. Ferocious monsters threaten at every turn. Evil magic lurks in the shadows. And to raise the stakes, questions of identity hang in the balance.

Ashton
9999
905
Precis
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237
Chisato
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836
Dias
9999
860

Port Hilton

So you must battle against the evil and hideous monsters in real-time, polygonal combat. You can customize complicated combination moves and set up decoys to take the fall. But no matter what, there's still no end in sight.

Because who you choose to talk to and share information with will greatly affect you. Characters can think and feel for themselves. Some will join you on your quest, others will betray you. And to add to the challenge, you have the option of playing two different characters, both unique in personality and both having an impact on the course of the game.

Even your emotions determine the fate of your journey. You may choose to be romantically linked with another character, or you may choose to remain friends. But no matter what, it will affect your path. And more seriously, if a friend dies in battle, you'll feel incredible rage that will cause you to fight with even more furious combat moves.

And there is no easy way out. Tools and skills do not just appear along the way. You must create many items from raw materials. And to do that you will then find yourself mastering difficult skills like alchemy, metalwork, songwriting, and even cooking.

You will find yourself braving the countless routes while traveling through this game. And there are over 80 endings. The deeper you delve, the more you'll discover that nothing – no detail, no clue, no conversation, no skill – can be taken for granted. And that anything is possible. Including the fact that you might not ever make it back.

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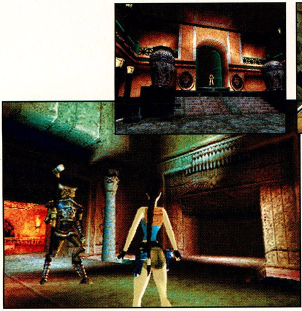
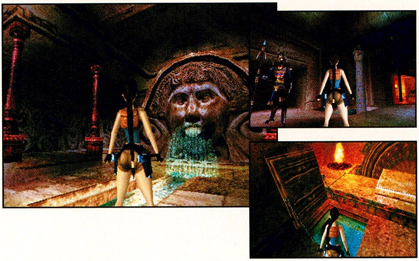
Tomb Raider: Last Revelation

Media darling and fanboy favorite Lara Croft is back for a fourth globe-trotting adventure. More ancient tombs, mysterious relics and supernatural conspiracies need uncovering, and our Lara is just the gal for the job. This time around the adventure takes place entirely in the ruins of ancient Egypt, and will involve elements of magic and the occult!



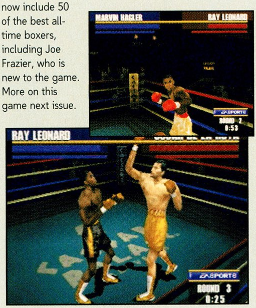


Theme Action	**Publisher** EIDOS
# of Players 1	**Developer** Core Design

URL: www.eidosinteractive.com

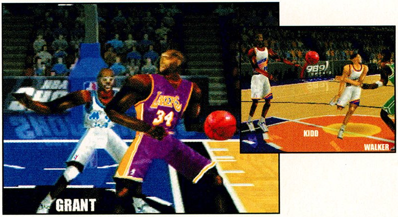
Knockout Kings 2000

Seeking to address some of the weaknesses of last year's title, EA is aiming to make Knockout Kings a much smoother and faster boxing simulation. The game is being loaded up with more features (such as a new training mode) and will also now include 50 of the best all-time boxers, including Joe Frazier, who is new to the game. More on this game next issue.



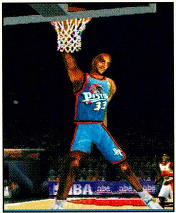
Theme Sports	**Publisher** EA
# of Players 1-2	**Developer** EA Sports

URL: www.easports.com



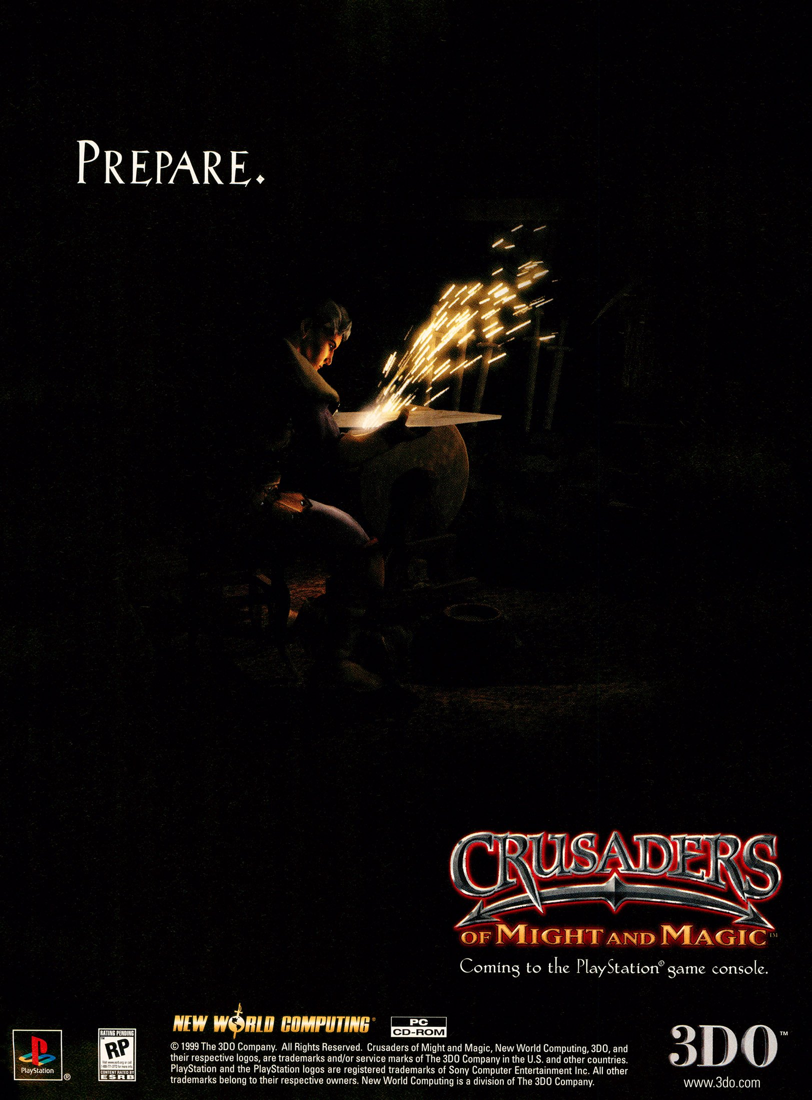
NBA ShootOut 2000

If there's one sport that 989 Sports has had trouble with in the last few years, it's been NBA basketball. It looks like we're finally going to see a new version of ShootOut right on schedule, however, and the graphics look pretty good thus far. Let's hope 989 gets their hoops franchise back on track—for real this time.



Theme Sports	**Publisher** 989 Studios
# of Players 1-4	**Developer** 989 Sports

URL: www.989studios.com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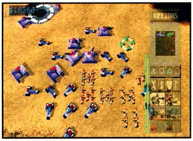
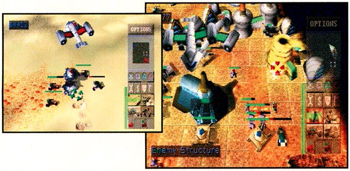
Dune 2000

There's a good chance that many of you don't remember the original Dune, a game that started the real-time strategy craze. It was a great game, but when this remake came out for the PC, some were disappointed. Westwood has put more sweat into this one, as evidenced by the polygonal graphics. Let's hope this version fares better.



Theme Strategy **Publisher** EA
# of Players 1-2 **Developer** Westwood
URL: www.westwood.com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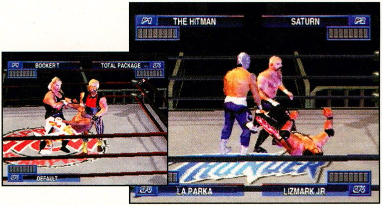
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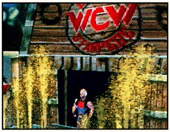
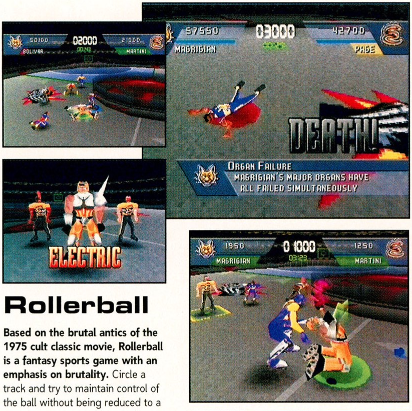
LA PARKA
LIZMARK JR.

WCW Mayhem

The whole wrasslin' license game seems a lot like the sport it represents these days: The WWF license left Acclaim and is now with THQ, and the WCW license has left THQ for EA. Somewhere in all of this, the ECW license broods like a sulking Bret Hart, waiting for its chance to strut its stuff. In any regard, check out these latest shots of WCW Mayhem, EA's first effort at a licensed wrestling title. Will Goldberg and the gang be enough to steal the belt away from Acclaim and THQ's WWF titles? We're not gonna play God (re: Vince McMahon) and pass judgment yet, but it sure is lookin' sweet.



Theme Sports **Publisher** EA
# of Players 1-4 **Developer** EA
URL: www.ea.com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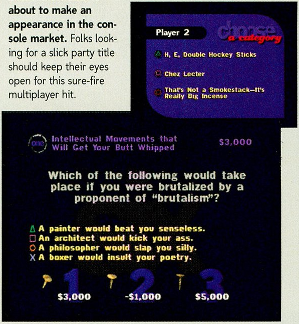
Rollerball

Based on the brutal antics of the 1975 cult classic movie, Rollerball is a fantasy sports game with an emphasis on brutality. Circle a track and try to maintain control of the ball without being reduced to a bloody pulp. Rollerskating is for wimps? Ha!

Theme Sports **Publisher** TBA
# of Players 1-2 **Developer** Z-Axis
URL: TBA

You Don't Know Jack

After a long, popular run on home computers, You Don't Know Jack is about to make an appearance in the console market. Folks looking for a slick party title should keep their eyes open for this sure-fire multiplayer hit.



Player 2

choose a category

△ H, E, Double Hockey Sticks

□ Chez Lecter

○ That's Not a Smokestack—It's Really Big Incense

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□ An architect would kick your ass.
○ A philosopher would slap you silly.
X A boxer would insult your poetry.

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Theme Misc. **Publisher** Berkeley Systems
# of Players 1-3 **Developer** Jellyvision
URL: www.berksys.com

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RATING PENDING RP CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Z-AXIS

ROCKSTAR GAMES

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TEEN T CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Tommy Boy

PRIMA GAMES

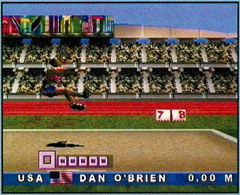
WCW...The Album Coming 10.19.99
Prima Strategy Guide Available.

Gekido

If Fighting Force left you craving a good 3D brawler, then hunger ye no more: Gremlin's Gekido may be the feast you're looking for. Featuring anime-inspired character designs, over-the-top special effects and a tight play engine, this hardcore beat-'em-up draws from the examples of Final Fight and Streets of Rage for inspiration, all the while adding a 3D, 32-Bit flair of its own.

Theme Action **Publisher** Interplay
# of Players 1-2 **Developer** Gremlin
URL: www.interplay.com

Theme Sports **# of Players**
Publisher TBA **Developer** Z-Axis
URL: www.x.com



Dan O'Brien Decathalon

Goodwill Games champ Dan O'Brien lends his name to this entry in the rather uncrowded track and field genre. Unlike similar titles, your character's speed and performance is based not on how fast you whack a button, but in how closely you can follow the order of the buttons displayed on the screen. Think PaRappa the Runner, and you have an idea as to how this unique control scheme works.

Army Men: Air Attack

Those foul-tempered little plastic platoonsmen are back to wreak havoc in your lawn and kitchen; only this time, they've commandeered a chopper. Look out, G.I. Joe! Death from above!

Theme Action **Publisher** 3DO
# of Players 1 **Developer** 3DO
URL: www.3do.com

Die Hard Trilogy 2

With the recent popularity of games like Syphon Filter and Metal Gear Solid, Fox Interactive felt it was time to resurrect their popular "Die Hard" license for a second "Trilogy" outing. Expect destruction on a massive scale, John McClain style.

Theme Action **Publisher** Fox Interactive
# of Players 1 **Developer** n-Space
URL: www.foxinteractive.com

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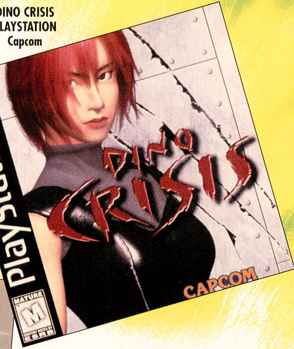
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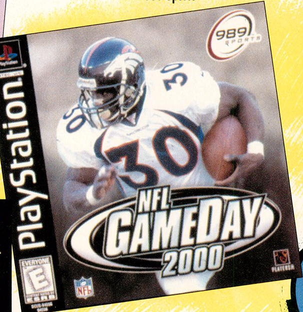
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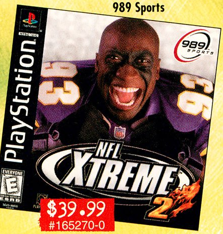
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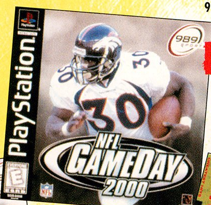
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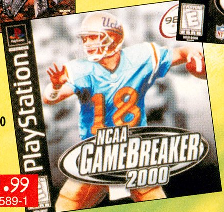
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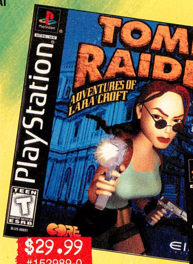
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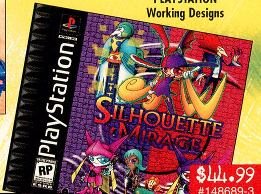
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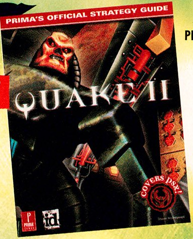

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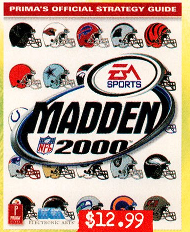

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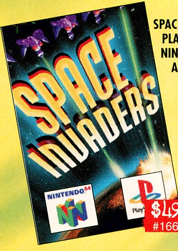

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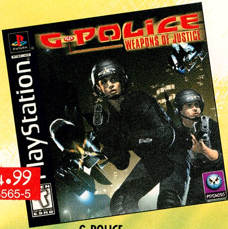

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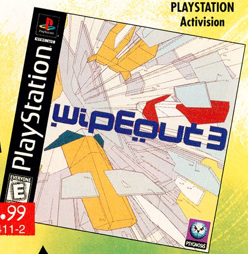

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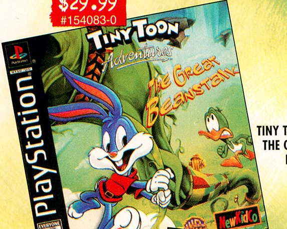
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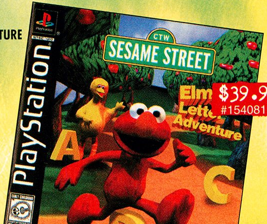
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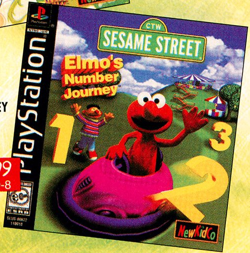
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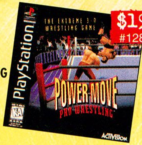
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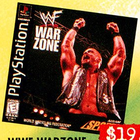
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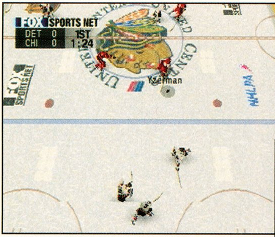
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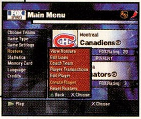
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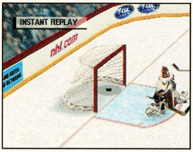
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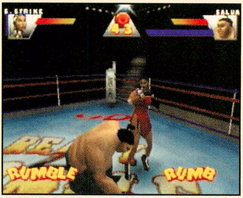
Theme Sports **Publisher** Fox Sports Int.
# of Players 1-4 **Developer** Fox Sports
URL: www.foxsports.com

Fox NHL Championship 2000

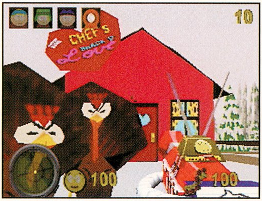
Fox Sports Interactive's entry into the ultra-competitive NHL vidgame area sports not only a full NHL license, but a number of international teams, such as Sweden and Germany, as well. Lace up those skates, sharpen those sticks, and get ready to teach those uppity Euros a thing or two about life on the ice. Or vice versa.

Theme Sports **Publisher** Midway
# of Players 1-2 **Developer** Midway
URL: www.midway.com


RUMBLE
RUMB

Ready 2 Rumble

Midway is a company with an established record of making excellent arcade titles out of sports, and Ready 2 Rumble is no exception. Featuring a roster of 20 boxers, and following the over-the-top tradition of other arcade boxers such as Punch Out, Ready 2 Rumble is going to bring its own brand of brutal pugilistics to your TV screen. Are YOU ready to rrrrrumble?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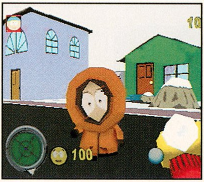
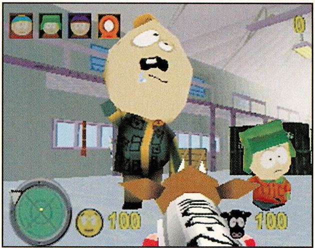




South Park

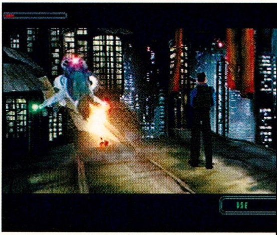
After a successful run on the Nintendo 64, the irreverent first-person shooter based on the even-more-irreverent TV series is finally heading to the PlayStation. Mutant turkeys and evil aliens have besieged the quiet little redneck mountaintown of South Park, and it's up to those comrades in crudity—Kyle, Stan, Kenny and Cartman—to thwart their nefarious plans. Weapons include urine-laced snowballs, fart fiends Terrance and Philip and the devastating cow launcher. Multiplayer allows you to play as almost any character from the show, including Ike. Kick the baby!

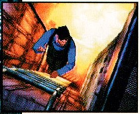
Theme Action **Publisher** Acclaim
# of Players 1-2 **Developer** Iguana
URL: www.acclaim.net

Quake II

At long last, this multiplayer fragfest favorite is nearing release on the PlayStation, and it just keeps looking better each time we see it. The levels have been faithfully re-created from the PC version, but it's the multiplayer action that's going to be the crucial feature. Fortunately, from what we've seen so far Activision has managed to incorporate four-player split screen with little or no slowdown!

Theme Action
Publisher Activision
# of Players 1-4
Developer id Software
URL: www.activision.com



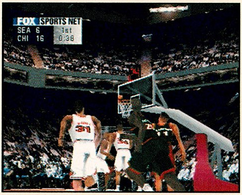


Fear Factor

With an elegant shading engine that gives a very gritty, comic-style look to the characters, Fear Factor weaves a complex tale of espionage and violence in the near future. This noirish adventure promises to deliver both a gripping story and plenty of graphic thrills.

Theme Action
Publisher EIDOS Interactive
# of Players 1
Developer Kronos Digital Ent.
URL: www.eidos.com

Theme Sports
Publisher Fox Interactive
# of Players 1-4
Developer Radical Ent.
URL: www.foxinteractive.com



Fox NBA Basketball 2000

Made by the same team that made the defunct ESPN basketball game, this basketball title shows promise. More promise than their signing of Steve Smith as their spokesperson, at least.

Coming Soon

Compiled exclusively for OPM by Johnny Masthead and Dan Peluso

September

Dino Crisis	Capcom	Adventure
Gran Turismo 2	Sony CEA	Racing
Mission: Impossible	Infogrames	Adventure
Omega Boost	Sony CEA	Action
Space Invaders	Activision	Action
WipeOut 3	Psygnosis	Racing

October

Army Men: Air Attack	3DO	Action
Medal of Honor	Electronic Arts	Action
Pac-Man World 20th Anniversary	Namco	Action
Pong	Hasbro Interactive	Action
Vigilante 8: Second Offense	Activision	Action

Future Releases

Ace Combat 3	Namco	Action
Action Man	Hasbro Interactive	Action
Chocobo's Mysterious Dungeon 2	Square Electronic Arts	RPG
Colony Wars Red Sun	Psygnosis	Action
Crash Team Racing	Sony CEA	Racing
Daikatana	Eidos	Action
Danger Girl	THQ	Action
Destruction Derby 3	Psygnosis	Racing
Die Hard Trilogy 2	Fox Interactive	Action
Dragon Valor	Namco	RPG
Dukes of Hazzard	SouthPeak Interactive	Action
Eagle One: Harrier Attack	Infogrames	Action

Future Releases (cont.)

Fear Factor	Eidos	Adventure
Flintstones Bedrock Bowling	SouthPeak Interactive	Sports
Fox Sports Pro Basketball 2000	Fox Interactive	Sports
Frogger 2	Hasbro Interactive	Action
Gekido	Interplay	Fighting
Glover	Hasbro Interactive	Action
Hydro Thunder	Midway	Racing
IS Internal Section	Square Electronic Arts	Action
Jeremy McGrath Supercross 2000	Acclaim	Racing
Knockout Kings 2000	EA Sports	Sports
Missile Command	Hasbro Interactive	Action
Mortal Kombat Special Forces	Midway	Action
Motocross Madness	Psygnosis	Racing
NASCAR 2000	EA Sports	Racing
NBA In the Zone 2000	Konami	Sports
NBA Live 2000	EA Sports	Sports
NBA Showtime	Midway	Sports
NHL 2000	EA Sports	Sports
NHL Championship 2000	Fox Interactive	Sports
Nickelodeon's Cat Dog	Hasbro Interactive	Action
Nightmare Creatures II	Activision	Adventure
Planet of the Apes	Fox Interactive	Action
Prince of Persia 3D	Red Orb	Action
Q*Bert	Hasbro Interactive	Action
Railroad Tycoon 2	Rockstar	Strategy
Rainbow Six	Red Storm Entertainment	Action
Rayman 2: The Great Escape	Ubi Soft	Action
Ready 2 Rumble	Midway	Sports
Road Rash Unchained	Electronic Arts	Racing
Rollcage Extreme	Psygnosis	Racing
Rugrats Studio Tour	THQ	Action
Saga Frontier 2	Square Electronic Arts	RPG
Sheep	Empire	Strategy
Spider-Man	Activision	Action
Spyro 2	Sony CEA	Action
Star Wars: Episode I Racer	LucasArts	Racing
Supercross 2000	EA Sports	Racing
Team Buddies	Psygnosis	Strategy
Test Drive 6	Infogrames	Racing
The New Adventures of Batman	Ubi Soft	Action
Tiger Woods 2000	EA Sports	Sports
Tomb Raider: Last Revelation	Eidos	Adventure
Toy Story 2	Activision	Action
Vandal Hearts 2	Konami	RPG
Wild Wild West	SouthPeak Interactive	Adventure

All release dates are tentative and subject to change. More information on all future releases will be given as it becomes available.

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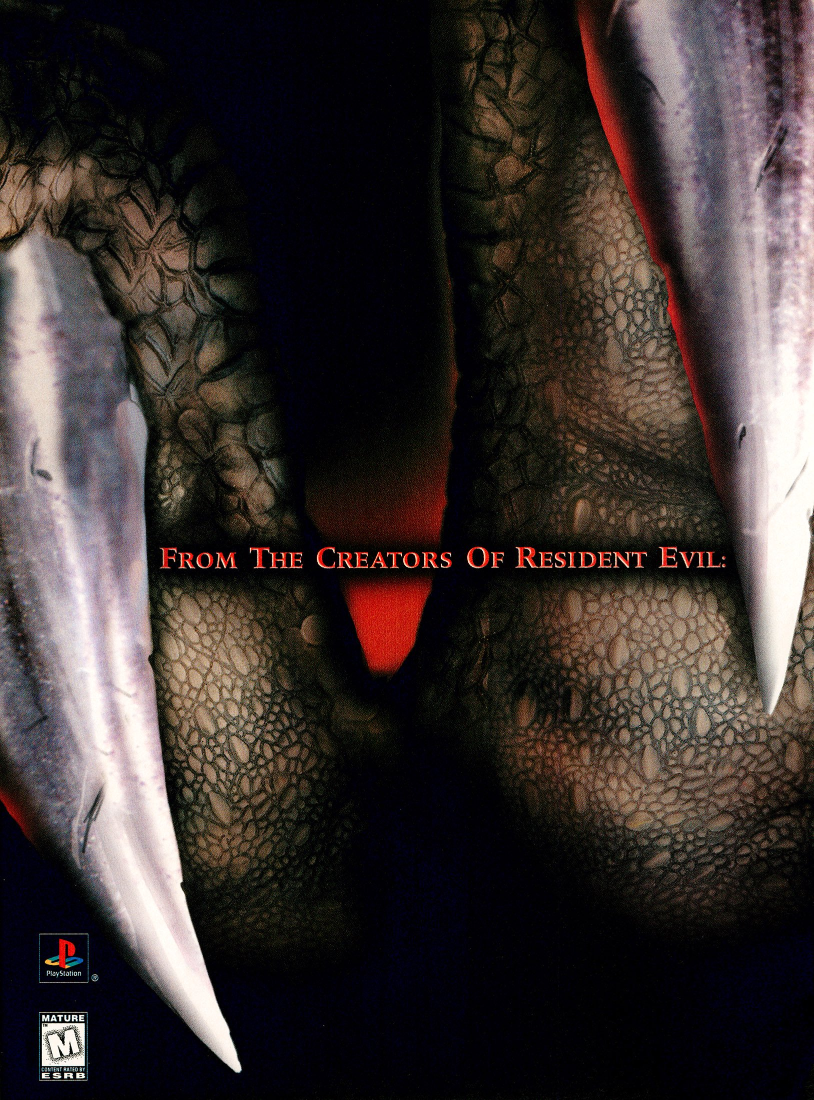
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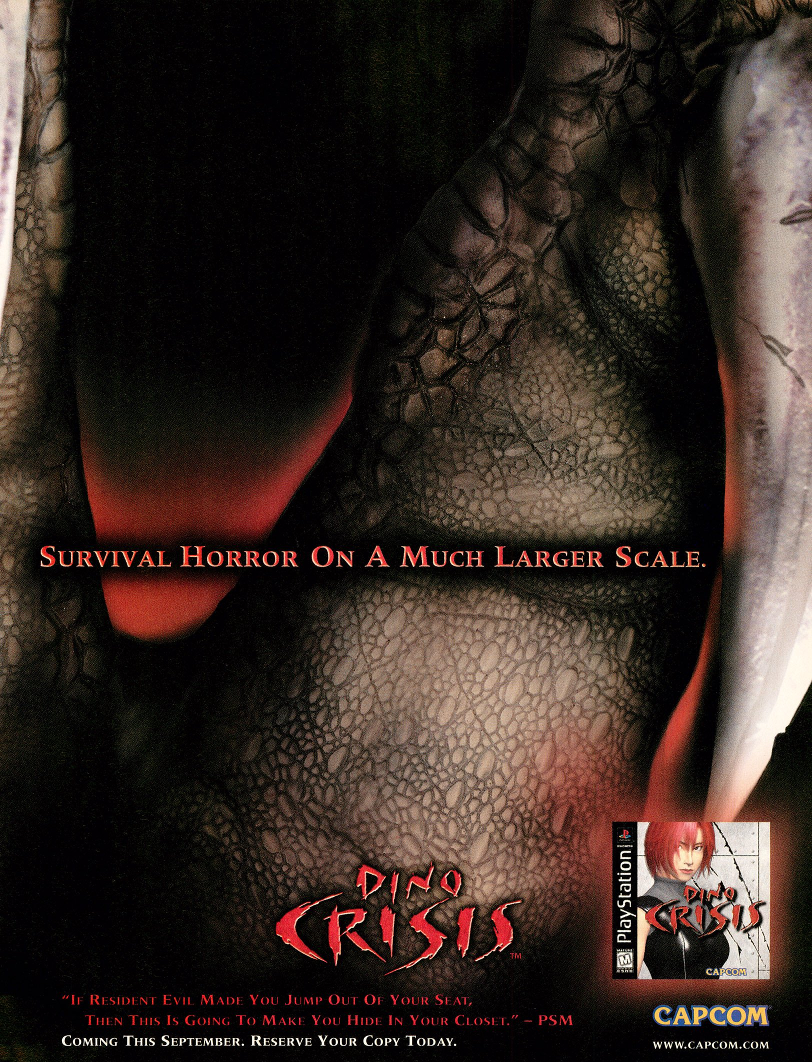

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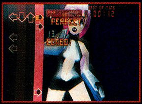
Goo! Goo! Soundy

Sept. 22, Konami

Keeping Konami's tradition of musically oriented (and interestingly titled) games like Dance Dance Revolution, Guitar Freaks and Beatmania comes their latest, Goo! Goo! Soundy. With the same press-the-button-on-the-beat gameplay and similar graphics to those games, you might just pass it off as another dull Pop-n-Music-style clone, but Goo! Goo! has a hook—you can put in your own music CDs to play along to. It's also compatible with the custom controllers Konami has put out for their other games, so you can dust off your Beatmania and Pop'n'Music turntables, or that Dance Dance Revolution dancing pad. If they can make it work, it sounds very cool, but that's a very big if...



PERFECT!!
0:02:07
BIT MACHINE

Geppy-X

Now, Aroma

Welcome to 197X. As a tribute to the likes of Go Nagai and other pioneers of '70s anime, Geppy-X offers hectic 2D side-scrolling action on four CDs full of FMV and soundtrack goodness. Levels come in the form of episodes complete with theme music, and even commercials!

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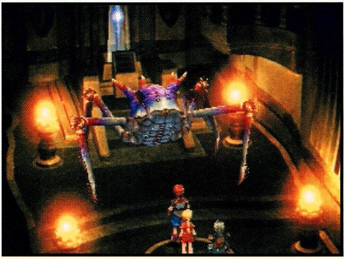
10
02

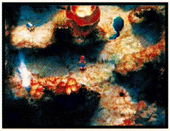
SCORE 0043360
BOSS
X POWER
145
02

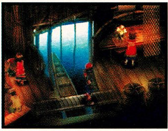
Chrono Cross

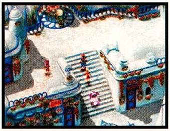
Square

After years of whispered rumors and excited speculation, Square finally announced the sequel to their old Super Nintendo RPG Chrono Trigger, and it's everything gamers have been dreaming of...or is it? Surprising Chrono Trigger fans everywhere, the Chrono Cross demo included with the Japanese release of Legend of Mana sheds little light on what relationship the sequel has with the original. The three characters in the demo are all new, only a few vague references to the first game's characters are made, and any evidence of time travel is noticeably absent.



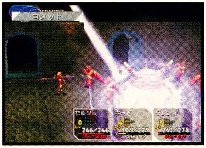






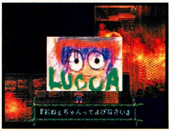
However, in many ways Chrono Cross definitely feels like a sequel. As before, enemies roam the dungeons, eliminating random encounters completely. The game's art and music has the same warm feel of the original's, from the lush town and dungeon scenery to the 2D overhead world map. A few familiar music cues even seep into the soundscape. The battle system may seem mostly new (as in Xenogears, you string together a series of weak, medium and strong attacks, where weak attacks increase the probability that the stronger blows will connect later), but hidden within the demo are the series' trademark Dual Techniques.

Chrono Cross is obviously receiving a lot of attention and a big budget from Square. The beautiful backdrops blend both rendering and hand-drawn art, allowing architectural precision and a natural feel. The fully 3D battle engine is equally impressive, sporting superbly detailed character models and textures. While not as well integrated as in the Final Fantasy series, the two snippets of the game's FMV also look impressive.



Rabid Crono Trigger fans hoping for a direct sequel may be disappointed, but for those open-minded to change, Crono Cross looks like it has a lot of potential. And there may still be hope of some crossover potential—the end of the demo shows footage of Lucca's (from Chrono Trigger) burning house, with portraits of the original's cast hanging on the wall.

On course for release in Japan this spring and already confirmed for the U.S. in 2000, Chrono Cross looks like it could be the next big (non-Final Fantasy) title from Square. Keep your fingers crossed!



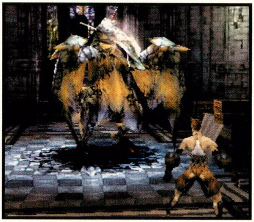
100
213/245
226/226
126/277

Theme Act/RPG **# of Players** 1
Availability Winter **Developer** Square

Vagrant Story

Square

For a company that has been talking about how they are going to scale back and produce fewer games, Square sure seems to be announcing a lot of new titles recently. This month, in addition to Crono Cross, they gave a quick peek at their new action/RPG Vagrant Story, both in a non-playable demo packed with The Legend of Mana and at a press event for U.S. magazines at Square HQ in Tokyo.

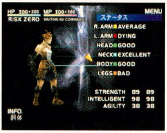


Described as a mix of elements from other popular games like Resident Evil and Metal Gear Solid, Vagrant Story features impressive high-res graphics in its fully 3D characters and environments. Players can target specific parts of enemies for more effective hits, like attacking the hand of a monster with an axe to disarm it, or hitting a quick creature's legs to slow it down.

Bringing to life characters designed by Akihiko Yoshida, the same man responsible for Final Fantasy Tactics, Vagrant Story already has a great look to it. Watch for more on it after its released in Japan this fall and in America early next year.

HP 55·100 MP 100·100
RISK 1 WT 8
96

Theme Action/RPG **# of Players** 1
Availability Fall **Developer** Square



15
86
TOTAL 0:33:20
5

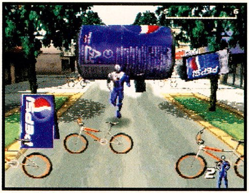
Pepsiman

Kindle Imagine

If you've never seen or heard of the popular Japanese Pepsiman series of TV commercials, they usually go something like this: person (man, woman, child, snowboarder, boxer, etc) is thirsty; enter Pepsiman, a computer-generated, muscular superhero-type who speeds to the scene in his silver and blue tights while his theme song blares (dum da-dada dum da-dada PEPSI-MAAAN!), magically makes Pepsi appear, then gets screwed over somehow (hit by truck, runs into wall, gets beaten to pulp, falls off cliff).

They are actually pretty entertaining, and so is the game, which follows the same formula as the commercials—you guide Pepsiman as he runs (and skateboards, and rolls on a barrel, etc.) through stages at full speed, dodging obstacles (cars, trains, trucks, crazed bikers, water buffalo) and bystanders by dashing, jumping and sliding your way to the goal to serve some thirsty people ice-cold Pepsi. It's a lot like the stages from the Crash Bandicoot games where you run or ride an animal into and out of the screen, except here you pick up cans of Pepsi instead of fruit for points and extra men. Throw in extended versions and loud, looping remixes of the Pepsiman theme (PEP! PEP! PEPSIMAN!) and you've got a game guaranteed to amuse and annoy the hell out of your friends and family. Isn't that what it's really all about?

Theme Action **# of Players** 1
Availability Now **Developer** Kindle

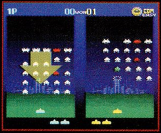


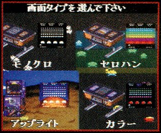
Space Invaders 2000

Now, Taito

Given the popularity of recent retro-games like Frogger and Centipede, this month we take a look back at another refitted older title unfortunately never released in America. Space Invaders 2000 is a great example of a rerelease done right.

Of course the original game is included, and in every form it ever appeared in at the arcade (black and white, in color, with the different backgrounds—there's even an option where you can flip your TV on its side so it's exactly like the arcade screen). But the best part is the added VS-battle mode, where certain invaders turn different colors and let two players have it out puzzle game-style. Hit a red guy and move your opponent's invaders down two lines, a green guy to wipe out a whole line of aliens, or nail the UFO up top to swap your complete line-up. Throw in a special low price (just about $15) and what gamer old enough to remember these old classics could resist?





SCORE<1> HI-SCORE SCORE<2>
0040 0000 0000

Time 00:28:83 Shoot 65%

It goes 0-60 almost as fast as it goes 0-360°

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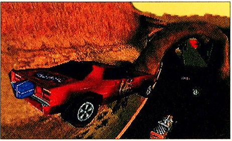

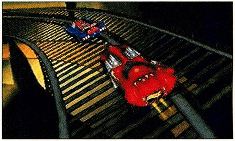

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Final Fantasy VIII

How do you top one of the most popular games of all time? Square answers the $200 million question.

by Mark MacDonald

In 1997, almost overnight, the role-playing game changed forever. In the eyes of the American gaming industry and public the genre suddenly transformed, from an awkward little nerd no one would even spit at if he was on fire, into a 250-pound kick-boxing movie star that any game company would be happy to step over their own mother's grave just to towel off.

Why? Seven million reasons, all called Final Fantasy VII, sold worldwide after its release in late '97. In the first two years of the PlayStation's life in America, a total of four RPGs were available. Four. Now, not even two years later, there are 16, with at least seven more due by the end of the year. Catapulted into the limelight by FFVII's record success, RPGs finally had hit the mainstream.

Obviously, this was all great news for the game's creator, Squaresoft. They made back many times over the $30 million they spent developing FFVII and established themselves as one of the premier game developers in the world, not to mention *the* developer in this hot new RPG market.

All great news—except for one problem, the problem Squaresoft director Yoshinori Kitase readily admits was the hardest part of his latest project—"how to create a game that will top Final Fantasy VII."

His team's answer in Final Fantasy VIII, surprisingly, is to change everything. Of course all sequels make some adjustments, but Final Fantasy VIII goes beyond the obligatory fresh coat of paint, rethinking some of the basic conventions most RPGs (including previous FFs) have always abided by.

Fantastic Voyage

Two things that have always changed from each Final Fantasy to the next are the story line and set of characters. This time the adventure begins in a military academy of sorts, called Garden, in the nation of Balamb. Young people enter their local Garden (there are several throughout the world) in the hopes of graduating and becoming a mem-

A few scenes from Final Fantasy VIII's almost full hour of incredible full-motion video sequences. It's no exaggeration when we say they are easily the best the PlayStation has ever seen.

> ***"Since we knew the PlayStation's capabilities this time, we held high goals."***
> ***—Director Yoshinori Kitase***

ber of SeeD, an elite mercenary military force that travels the globe settling disputes and conflicts. All students have to leave Garden at age 18, whether or not they are allowed into SeeD (and only the top students are). Enter the main hero—a young man named Squall Leonhart. Introverted and always serious, he is well known around Balamb Garden as a man of few words and somewhat of a lone wolf. Just as Squall is approaching graduation and hoping to be accepted into the elite SeeD corps, the neighboring country of Galbadia and its mysterious ambassador, Sorceress Edea, start an aggressive military campaign that looks like it could lead to all-out war.

How the story branches from there—and surprises from before the time when the game begins, told through flashbacks—is far too complicated to go into here, even if we wanted to.

And we don't, because often the best parts of any RPG, much less a Final Fantasy, are the twists and turns of the game's plot. Suffice to say, the story behind Final Fantasy VIII is as epic and ambitious as the series has ever seen, spanning four CDs with roughly 40 hours of gameplay in the main adventure alone (and much, much more if you include all the side-quests and minigames). It's got all the good stuff—action, romance, comedy, betrayal, death, love—presented in a way that keeps you guessing and needing to know what happens next. Everyone expects big things from each new episode of Square's saga, and they won't be disappointed.

Final Fantasy Finally Grows Up

Probably even more widely acknowledged than its reputation for great storytelling is Final Fantasy's tradition of setting new standards in graphics with each new addition to the series. FFVII wowed everyone with its crisp backgrounds, state-of-the-art FMV and incredible spell effects; but as Kitase explains, Square was just getting started. "For FFVII, since it was our first time working on the PlayStation, it took much of our time just to figure out its basic abilities. But the hardware was the same for FFVII and VIII, so in addition to creating the basic game concept for FFVIII, we tried to focus on how each picture could express emotions and how to enrich the body of the scenario. Since we knew the PlayStation's capabilities this time, we held high goals."

High goals indeed—the graphics in Final Fantasy VIII are the same basic format that

(continued on page 94)

Illustration by Wayne Vincent

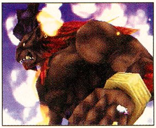
ADOPT A GUARDIAN FORCE

You may recognize them as summoning spells or purple materia from previous Final Fantasy games, but in FFVIII these powerful magical beings are known as Guardian Forces (or GFs), and they play a much more important role than ever before.

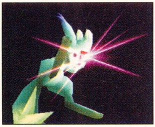
As in FFs past, they can be equipped by characters and then brought out in battle for special magical attacks. But when they are linked, or junctioned, to a character in FFVIII, each GF can also lend attribute bonuses and new skills to that person or to the whole party (see "Training Your GFs sidebar"). Also, the more any one character uses a Guardian Force, the more "compatible" the two become, increasing the speed that they work together in combat.

Every Guardian Force also has its own hit points, gains experience points and levels, and can even be given a new name, all just like normal characters.

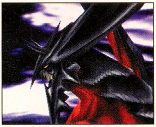
There are a lot of Guardian Forces out there looking for good homes, 16 in all. Sometimes you'll have to defeat them in combat before they will join your party, but deep down they all just want to be loved. So won't you open your heart and your home to these cute little guys? They make great companions, and you're sure to find yourself more attached to them with each passing combat. So here are just a few for your consideration...do it, if not for you, then for Sally Struthers.



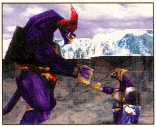
This 2000-year-old fire beast **Ifrit** is friendly and has had all his shots. He's just a little rambunctious, and is given to tossing giant flaming meteors, so a nice big backyard is a must. Very playful!



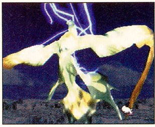
Carbuncle here would make a perfect companion for singles or the elderly. He's cute 'n' furry and loves to have his tummy rubbed, plus his magic protects the party against those pesky physical and magic attacks.



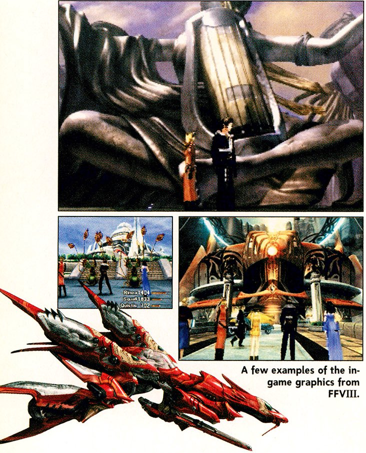
For a demon spawned from the fiery pits of hell, **Diablos** is surprisingly good with children and other pets. He is housebroken and trained to sit, roll over, hurl cursed spheres of evil gravity energy and shake.



These two **Brothers**, Minotaur and Sacred, are both looking for a home where they won't have to be split up. They'll need lots of attention and plenty of open space for their massive earth-shattering seismic attack.



Quezacotl is very sweet, but was spoiled by his previous owner and still needs to learn he can't go creating giant lightning storms in the house. He is quite shy, but gets along great with other Guardian Forces.



A few examples of the in-game graphics from FFVIII.

they were in VII (3D characters on rendered 2D backgrounds for towns and dungeons, full 3D for the overworld and battles), but the jump in quality is remarkable. The cute, cartoony "super-deformed" look, (huge heads, giant eyes, circus-midget body) that has been a mainstay through all previous Final Fantasies has finally been completely replaced by more mature and realistic adult dimensions in all the characters. Enemies and the giant boss creatures are now fully texture-mapped and more detailed as well, making the flat-shaded monsters from FFVII look like stuffed animals in comparison. Special care has been paid to animation throughout the game. For example, when anyone, friend or foe, takes damage in combat you can tell how badly they get hurt just by watching their movements. A small slap startles them, while a larger jolt almost knocks them over, and a killing blow causes them to collapse in a heap—each in their own unique way. Characters brought back from the dead even woozily collect their bearings before slowly rising to their feet.

The amount of attention the animation in FFVIII received wasn't only spent on people and things, but locations as well. Waves slowly lap at sandy beaches, TV monitors flash advertisements and morphing images, gears of giant machines churn slowly and let off steam; just about every other screen in FFVIII (and that's a *lot* of screens) has something going on, creating a feeling you are really in this world, not just running across flat paintings of it.

Even more exciting, Final Fantasy VIII also makes use of an emerging new technology where players can

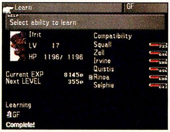
(continued on page 96)

TRAINING YOUR GUARDIAN FORCES

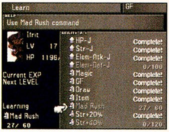
As we mentioned earlier, Guardian Forces in FFVIII don't just cast super-spells, but also learn special talents and power-boosting abilities you can't get anyplace else.

Each GF starts with a number of potential and already mastered skills they lend to any character who equips them. The player can then choose which ability they want the GF to learn next—anything from decreasing the amount of wandering monsters you encounter, to increasing hit points or other stats, to special commands available right off the battle menu, like mug (steal items from enemies as you attack), or counter (automatically counterattack when you receive damage).

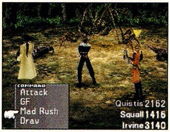
After any combat, GFs earn special Ability Points, or AP, which work like experience points toward earning these new skills. Then, for every new skill mastered, there is a chance that another potential ability will become available. For example, after a GF learns Boost Magic Power 10%, Boost Magic 20% may appear, and then 30% and so on. All kinds of new skills and abilities branch off one another and become available depending on what you decide to teach your GFs, which gives you a chance to customize them to your own tastes. So take an interest in your Guardian Force's training—it'll keep them off the streets and save your butt at the same time!


Learn GF
HELP
Select ability to learn
Ifrit
LV 17
HP 1196/ 1196
Current EXP 8145p
Next LEVEL 355p
Compatibility
Squall
Zell
Irvine
Quistis
Rinoa
Selphie
Learning
GF
Complete!

After choosing a Guardian Force from the GF selection off the main menu, you can see all its stats. Since Ifrit here has "Completed!" learning his current skill (lower left corner of the screen), let's choose a new one for him to learn.


Learn GF
HELP
Use Mad Rush command
Ifrit
LV 17
HP 1196/
Current EXP
Next LEVEL
Learning
Mad Rush
27/ 60
ABILITY
HP-J Complete!
Str-J Complete!
Elem-Atk-J Complete!
Elem-Def-J 0/100
Magic Complete!
GF Complete!
Draw Complete!
Item Complete!
Mad Rush 27/ 60
Str+20% Complete!
Str+40% 0/120

Lots of skills to choose from. Strength +40% is available since Ifrit has completed learning Str +20%, but Mad Rush—that sounds interesting, and he only needs 33 more AP to learn it. Let's try that.



A short time later and the Mad Rush skill is yours. It casts haste, berserk and protect on your whole party. Not always ideal, but great for pesky encounters like the one above, and it doesn't cost a thing to use!

Illustration by Wayne Vincent

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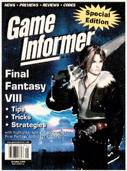
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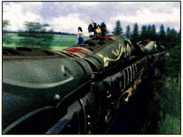
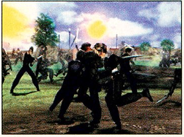
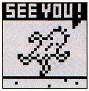
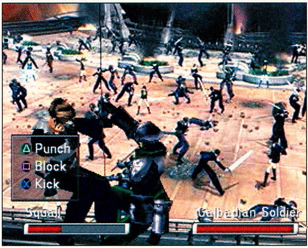






The PocketStation mini-game is included in the U.S. version of FFVIII, in case Sony decides to bring the PDA over at a later date. Hopefully we'll see you soon too, Li'l Cactaur!



Some of the exciting scenes in FFVIII where controllable real-time characters are placed over FMV backgrounds. One section even features a fighting mini-game in mid-air (left), while a huge battle rages on behind.

> *The old "cute" look has finally been replaced by more realistic characters*

control their character while prerecorded video is streamed off the disc for the background. It was actually used to a limited extent a couple of times before in FFVII and a handful of other games, but FFVIII pulls it off like never before. Imagine running across a battlefield, while behind you armies of soldiers collide, motorcycles scream by and bombs drop in huge earth-shaking explosions. Since the background is video, anything at all can be going on without having to worry about such things as polygon counts or frame-rates. The effect is astounding, and sure to be used more often in the future.

Speaking of video, Final Fantasy VII impressed many people with its then state-of-the-art FMV, but FFVIII blows it away. Simply put, this is the best FMV the PlayStation has ever seen, rivaling even the latest efforts of the big movie studios. Using motion-capture technology, the movement is more natural and realistic than ever before. And since the regular characters in the game look more like real people, the transition between parts of the story told using FMV and those done in real time are smooth and almost seamless.

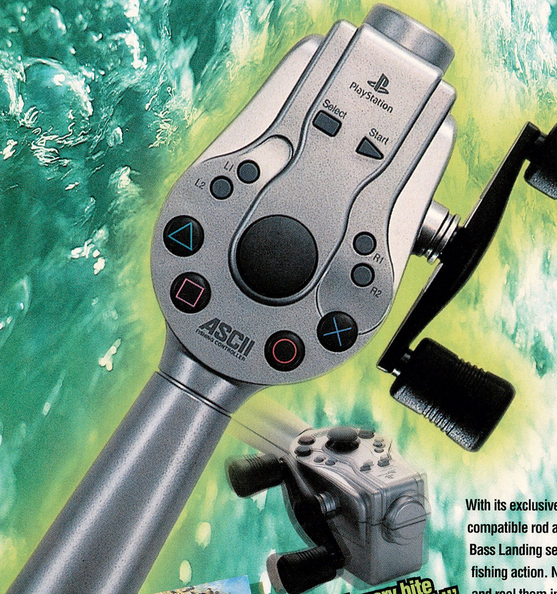
More than just a pretty face

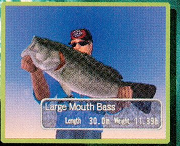
But this is a game after all, not a movie, and what many people are concerned about is how Final Fantasy VIII plays and not what it looks like. Those people can rest easy; FFVIII takes many dramatic departures from traditional RPG elements, but remains a very deep and customizable game.

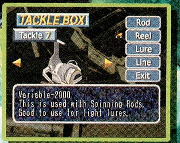
The first big difference is FFVIII has no magic points. You don't buy spells or learn them as you gain levels, but instead "draw" (as in suck) them out of opponents during combat. All enemy creatures have their own set of spells you can draw, so you always want to check what they have stocked—particularly boss monsters, who often have especially powerful and rare magic for the taking. The only place outside of combat you can gain spells are "draw points," magical wellsprings where you can stop and grab a quick bunch of spells for free that appear (often hidden) in towns and dungeons like save points. Of course you can use magic as always, to heal your friends and attack your enemies, but spells are also more like commodities in

(continued on page 98)

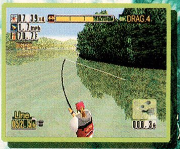
How Does Your Rod Measure Up?


PlayStation
Select
Start
L1
L2
R1
R2
ASCII
FISHING CONTROLLER


Large Mouth Bass
Length 30.0in Weight 11.39lb


TACKLE BOX
Tackle 7
Rod
Reel
Lure
Line
Exit

Variable-2000
This is used with Spinning Rods.
Good to use for light lures.


07 39x4
DRAG.4
1.7mph
70.7F
Line
052.5ft
000.3ft

With its exclusive Dual Shock® compatible rod and reel controller, Bass Landing sets the standard for true-to-life fishing action. Now you can cast, set the hook, and reel them in just like real life. So pack your tackle box, pick up some cold ones, and grab your rod, ‘cause fishing season is now open.

“Feel every bite and every fight”

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EVERYONE
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- Game is bundled with custom designed fishing rod/reel controller
- Solo or tournament modes
- 5 challenging lakes, 14 species of fish
- Cast side arm, overhead, or skip
- Tutorial mode tells how the pros hook the big ones
- Dual shock compatible
- Stock your tackle box from 50 different rods, reels, rigs, and lures

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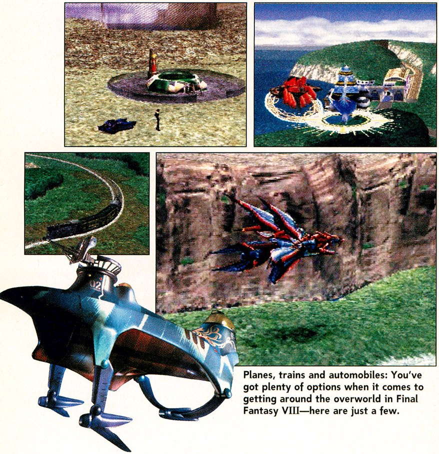


Planes, trains and automobiles: You've got plenty of options when it comes to getting around the overworld in Final Fantasy VIII—here are just a few.

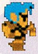
Final Fantasy VIII. You can collect them (up to 100 of any one spell), trade them between party members, and "Junction" them to your characters to increase stats and lend them all kinds of different abilities. For example, you could link a fire spell to your strength and double it, or link a haste spell to your dexterity to increase your speed. Later in the game you can also gain the ability to link magic to your weapons and armor to give them magical offensive and defensive properties. Attach a sleep spell to your sword and you have a chance of putting your foes to bed every time you make contact, or link poison magic to your armor and decrease the chances you can become infected by the enemy. The amount of variations and customization of your characters possible with this system is astounding; luckily for those people who don't want to spend hours flipping through menus, FFVIII has the option to let the computer do it for you. You can even direct it to favor one of three areas for each person—Strength, Magic or Defense.

With spells acting in many ways like weapons and armor, there's real-

(continued on page 100)

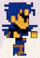
EVOLUTION OF A FANTASY

While some people actually believe that the Final Fantasy VIII universe was created by an all-powerful, all-knowing god (often referred to as "Developer" or "Skware"), our research here at *OPM* has uncovered the truth. By tracing and analyzing the lineage of the series back to the earliest recorded evidence of its existence, we can state with complete certainty that Final Fantasy VIII follows Darwin's theory of evolution. Just take a look:



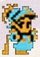
Final Fantasy I – 1987

Known simply as FIGHTER, the earliest FF male wore simple chocobo skins and lived as a nomad. His massive head is not a sign of intelligence, but due to its use as a weapon to smash things.



Final Fantasy II – 1988

Notice the woven clothes and shoulder pads; they suggest understanding and use of various tools. Legs tiny because of a popular new invention, "the wheel." Head still used to smash things.



Final Fantasy III – 1990

Emerging market economy fuels creation of "job" system. Note the even more intricate shoulder pads and purely ornamental cape. Shiny helmet makes the head a more effective weapon than ever.

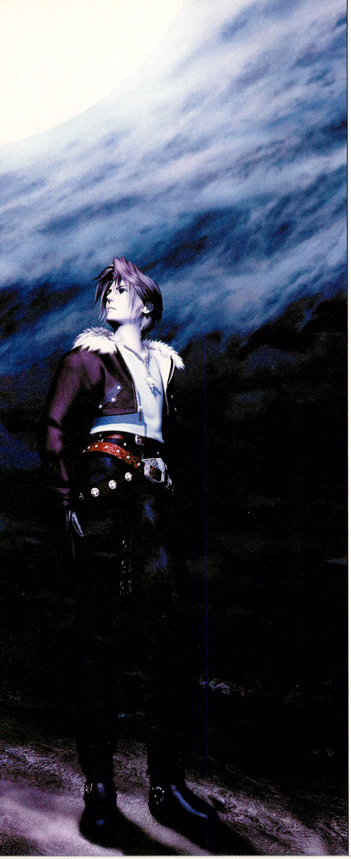


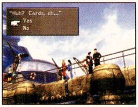
Illustration by Wayne Vincent

CARDS: MINIGAME OR TOOL OF SATAN?

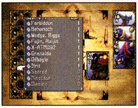
It all begins innocently enough. A cute little card minigame? Sure, why not? You're in no particular hurry—that giant rampaging boss monster about to crush the village can wait five minutes.

The rules seem simple: Each card has four numbers, one for each side. The basic idea is to place your cards on a 3x3 grid so that the numbers on any of its sides are higher than your opponent's cards on any bordering side. Whoever has the higher card "flips" the other card(s) and makes it their own (like in Othello). Whichever side has the most cards by the end of the game wins, and takes a card from the loser to keep. Got it so far?

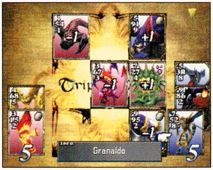
Now then, throw in a crapload of variations, like when the numbers are the same or two sides add up to the same number, add special playing boards, and countless other different local rules for every one-Chocobo town in the entire game and—hey wait! The computer cheated! Did you see that?! Give me my card back you rotten bastard! All right, I'll just win it back then...Ooh! I haven't seen that card before! Huh? What boss? Is that a rare card?



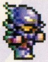
"Huh? Cards, eh..."
Yes
No



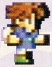
Forbidden 1
Behemoth 1
Wedge, Biggs 1
Fujin, Raijin 1
X-ATM092 1
Granaldo 1
Oilboyle 1
Ifrit 1
Sacred 0
Minotaur 0
Diablos 0



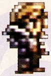
First find yourself a sucker (top left); next, choose the best five cards (left) you've won from previous matches (or stolen from monsters), and finally (top) get ready for some serious cardage.



Final Fantasy IV – 1991
Full body armor marks this as a dark time, when deadly airships and war ravaged the land. FF world enters an industrial age; first signs of increased resolution and color usage appear.



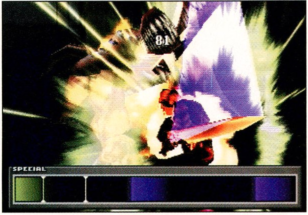
Final Fantasy V – 1992
Start of a Renaissance Era of learning and a true appreciation for the arts. Adventurers skilled in several different jobs (monk, samurai, dancer, etc.) resurface. Pageboy haircuts are all the rage.

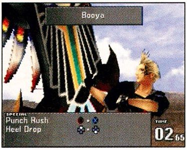


Final Fantasy VI – 1994
Contact with race of "Espers" and wider use of robots shows a people on the verge of advanced society. Fur-lined leather jackets, opera, and "fancy lad" hairdos are signs of the times.

Final Fantasy VII – 1997
First preserved remains found in polygons; overindustrialization threatens the world. Freakish hair indicates a moody people; grotesquely huge "Popeye" forearms due to exposure to materia.

Final Fantasy VIII – 1999
Modern FF man. Head and forearms finally of normal size and shape. Guardian Forces domesticated, furlined leather jacket look returns, card game is big, head used for thinking.





Combat in FFVIII is more hands-on, with timed button presses boosting your power.

ly no need for the traditional shops for those items, and there aren't any in FFVIII. Instead each character keeps the same basic weapon throughout the game, but can upgrade it to more powerful versions at any town's "junk shop." Provided, of course, they have gathered the necessary rare spare parts from defeated enemies and have enough cash to pay the blacksmith.

And speaking of money, you don't gain it by fighting monsters in FFVIII (which makes a little more sense when you think about it; after all, how many wild animals do you know that run around with change in their pockets?). Instead, as a member of SeeD, you automatically receive a salary at regular intervals based on your current SeeD ranking. You raise your rank by passing a number of yes-or-no exams of trivia questions, but it can also go up or down during the game based on a number of factors, including how effectively you defeat bosses and monsters, how long it takes you to finish dungeons, and more. So don't get lazy, or it's coming out of your paycheck.

The Final Fantasy?

What, are you joking? Final Fantasy VIII sold 2.5 million copies its *first day* on sale in Japan last winter, and while it probably won't match that when it comes out here on Sept. 7, it's still on track to sell more copies than FFVII worldwide. That's what you call ridin' a gravy train with biscuit wheels, and Square shows no signs of slowing it down anytime soon. In fact, they are already hinting at the next sequel in Japan, possibly coming out there as soon as early next year.

And let's not forget about the PlayStation 2. Mr. Kitase even had some parting words on the subject, which we'll leave you with to mull over while you daydream at the possibilities of a next-generation Final Fantasy game: "After completing projects (such as FFVII and FFVIII), there are times when I feel, 'I also wanted to do this, or that'. Of course some are ideas which cannot be realized on the PlayStation now, but I believe this will all change with the introduction of the new hardware."

FANTASY STARS

Let's check the record on recent video game-to-movie translations: *Mortal Kombat* 1—ehhh, s'alright; 2—crap. *Resident Evil*—on hold. *Tomb Raider*—on hold. *Double Dragon*—crap. *Street Fighter*—crap. *Wing Commander*—*total* crap. OK, OK, forget about the record—the upcoming Final Fantasy movie (due out in 2001) really looks like it's going to be *good*, damnit.

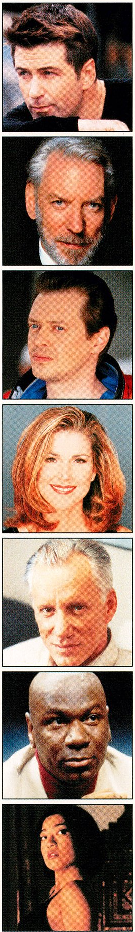
But you've heard that before, haven't you? Still skeptical, aren't you? Swore you would rub bleach in your eyes before you sat through another excruciating hour-and-a-half- long, *Wing Commander*-calibre turd, didn't you? You know what? We did too. So put down the Clorox and allow us to present our case:

First of all, Hironobu Sakaguchi, executive producer of the Final Fantasy games, is directing the movie, and the Gooch hasn't let us down yet. He's proven he can deliver to a wide audience without disappointing the core fans.

Next you have the fact that the entire film will be fully computer-generated graphics from the gurus at Square, and after you see the FMV in FFVIII you will know this is definitely a good thing.

Yeah, it's true that two of the producers on the FF movie project also worked on the *Street Fighter* movie. But hey, what the hell do producers do anyway? Plus *nobody* working on the FF movie was *in any way* involved with *Wing Commander*, so it all kind of balances out. *Nobody*. We cannot stress that enough.

But the best news of all is the recently announced cast of voice actors—some of the biggest and most respected names in show business today (and Peri Gilpin). We all know from PlayStation games and other movies (aye-um a'talkin s'bouts yussa, Jar-Jar) that voice acting can make or break an experience, and Square certainly seems to be headed in the right direction. Just check out this ensemble:



(top to bottom) **Alec Baldwin** last starred in *Mercury Rising*, but really hasn't had a hit movie recently. **Donald Sutherland** is no stranger to the screen, having been in over 100 movies. **Steve Buscemi,** of *Reservoir Dogs* and *Armageddon* fame, will lend his trademark whining. **Peri Gilpin** is...uh...um..oh! She plays Roz on the TV show *Fraiser*. **James Woods** is a name that needs no introduction. You've probably seen **Ving Rhames** in *Pulp Fiction* or *Mission: Impossible*, but you should check out his incredible performance in *Don King: Only in America*. It's excepsationable! Finally, don't hold the fact that **Ming-Na Wen** was Chun-Li in *Street Fighter* against her; her voice work as the lead character in Disney's *Mulan* was excellent.

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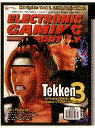

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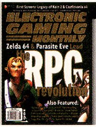

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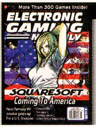

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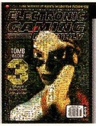

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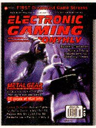

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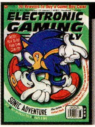

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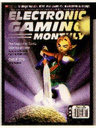

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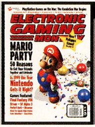

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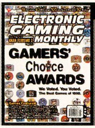

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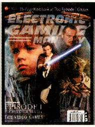

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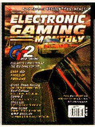

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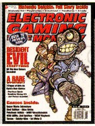

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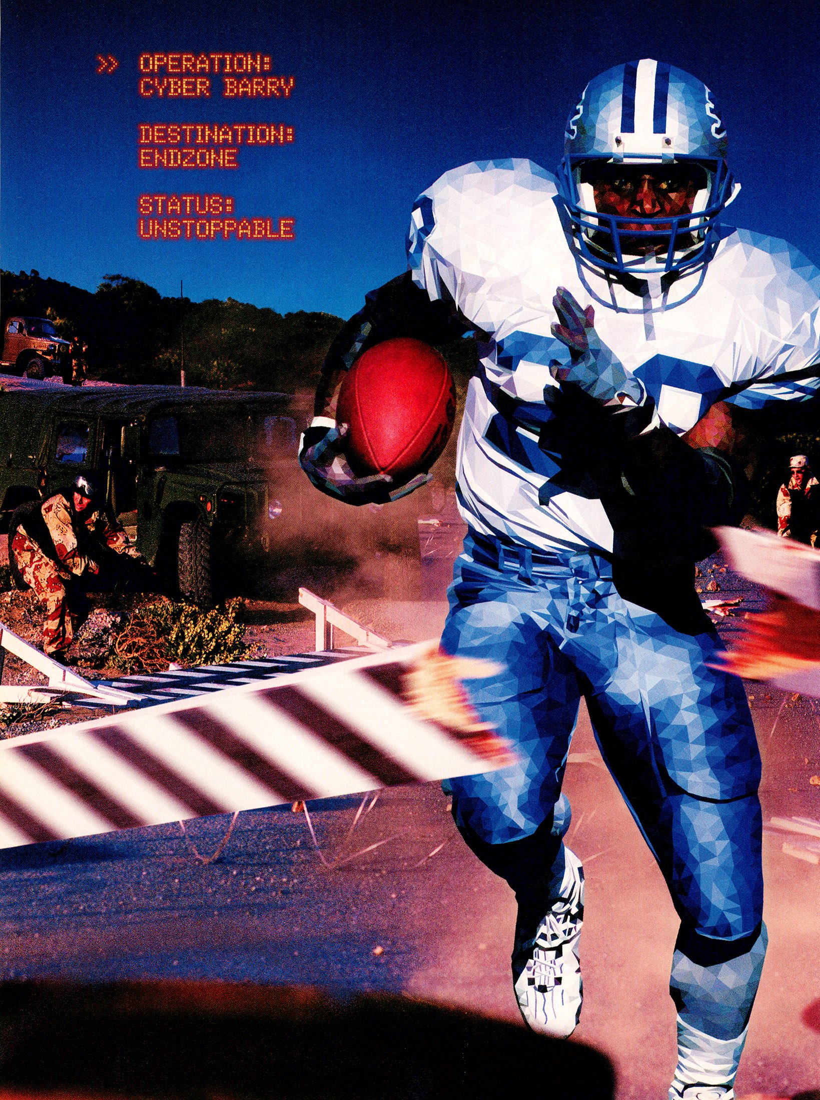
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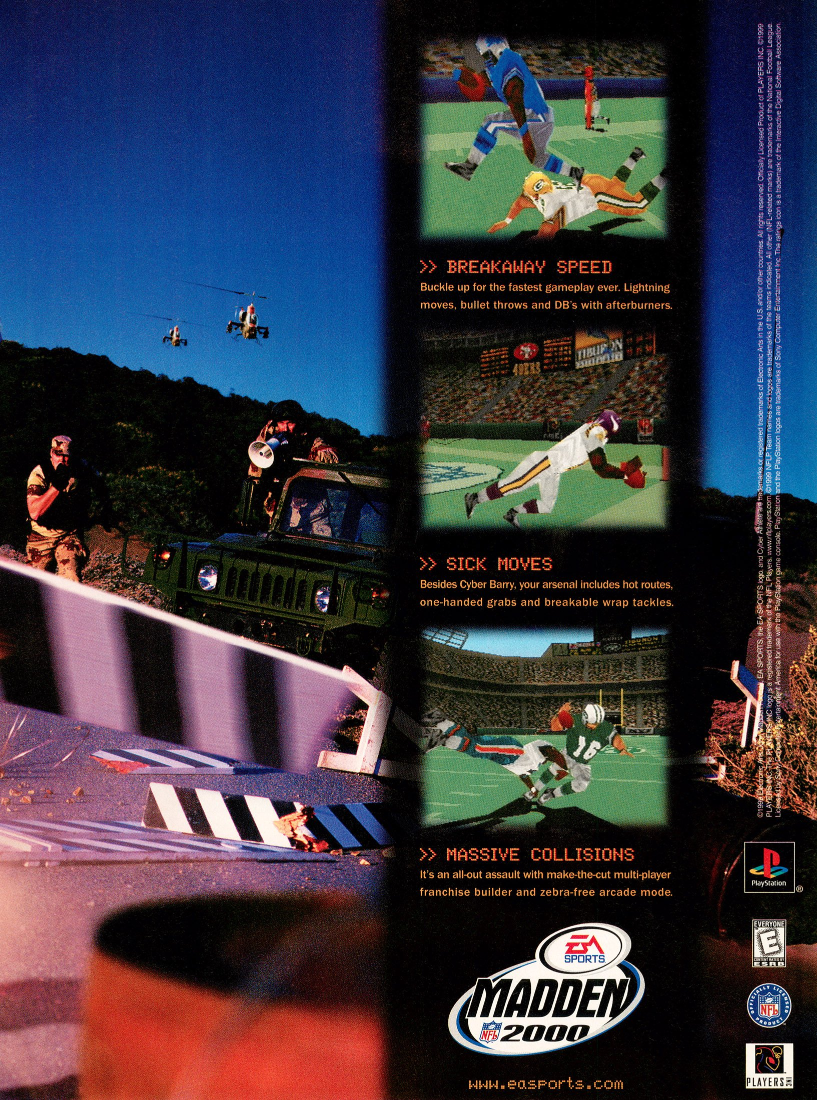

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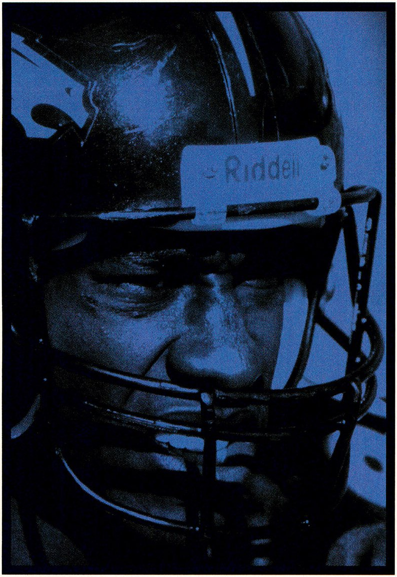
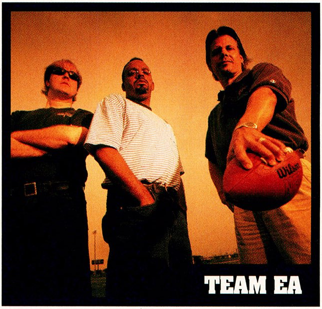
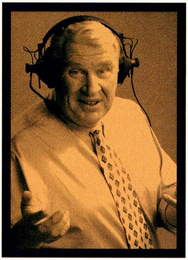




TEAM EA



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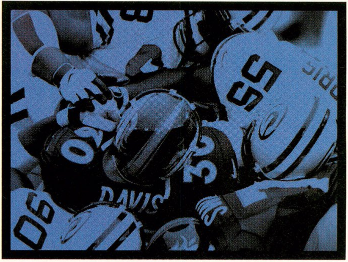
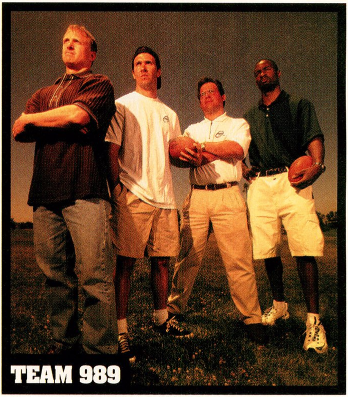


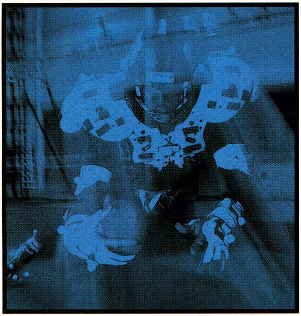
EA Sports and 989 Sports Go to War in 2000 Armed With the Two Best Football Games the PlayStation Has Ever Seen


TEAM 989

NNIUM

Madden's Starting Lineup

JOHN
TURK
ART MANAGER
EA SPORTS
ROB
JONES
ASSISTANT
PRODUCER
A SPORTS
SCOTT
TAYLOR
DEVELOPMENT
DIRECTOR
EA SPORTS



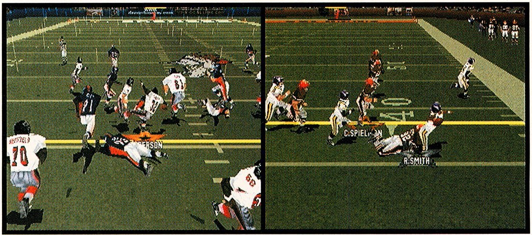
EA Sports brought in Terrell Owens so they could motion-capture some highflying catches, like the miracle game-winning grab he had in the NFC playoffs versus Green Bay last year.

With the start of every new football season comes a battle almost as big as the Super Bowl itself—the inevitable and monumental showdown between PlayStation pigskin heavyweights: EA Sports' Madden and 989 Sports' GameDay. This year-to-year battle will be won by the best, and the battle of the two developers trying to stay ahead of each other is a gruelling one.

While the folks at 989 Sports proudly boast they have the top-selling football franchise on the PlayStation, it's also true that those numbers have been padded by EA Sports' most embarrassing moment—Madden NFL 96 not shipping. In fact, last year's Madden NFL 99 topped GameDay in sales on a truly level playing field. Clearly, neither game has been able to muster an insurmountable lead over the other, but that won't stop them from trying.

THE WAR ROOM

Scott Taylor, development director of Madden NFL 2000, explains EA's goals at the beginning of Madden 2000's development: "We always rethink our approach and get creative. The last thing we want to do is take something out. We wanted to not lose focus on gameplay, so there is a drive to put more drama and more actual fun factor into it. We really wanted to crank it up another notch." Rob Jones, assistant producer on Madden, adds: "Improving the look of the game was critical. We had to rewrite our graphics engine from scratch to get the frame-rate that we wanted. You know how much we got hammered on frame-rate

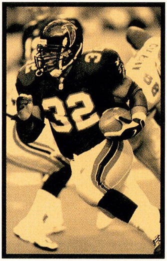


The highlight of Madden 2000's all-new polygonal graphics is the realistic sense of momentum and speed that's felt when your ball-carrier takes a thumping. Nearly every player involved in the carnage will find himself eating the turf in one way or another.

> **“If you want to see what features GameDay 2000 is going to have, just look at Madden 99. We put in franchise last year, they put it in this year. We had practice mode last year, and guess what?”**
>
> **—Rob Jones, Madden NFL 2000 Assistant Producer**

with Madden NFL 99. That was one mandate, if not our biggest—getting the game running as fast as possible. And we've achieved it.”

The aesthetic differences between Madden 2000 and its predecessor are colossal. Gone are the sluggish game speed and frame-rate that robbed Madden 99 of its intensity, and in some players' opinions, its fun. This year's game is powered by a much faster graphics engine that for the first time gives the PlayStation Madden franchise beauty that matches its brains. Nearly every detail has been improved and the game now runs at a silky smooth frame-rate.



But there are a few other additions that the Madden team is most proud of. John Turk, Madden 2000's art director, elaborates: “The new multiple player models made the faster game speed harder to accomplish. We didn't remove anything, we added stuff. We didn't just scale the players like some of the other games do. We actually have three different distinct player models with three different levels of detail.” The new player models Turk speaks of include three variations of weight and height. Linemen have bulging bellies, while skilled positions are athletic and lean. Also, all-new motion-captured animations were needed to implement the new models and accentuate the ones from past games.

“We motion-captured all of our animations from scratch,” says Turk. “We expanded our library with new motion-capture sets from Jamal Anderson and Terrell Owens as well as of all of our data from the past.”

Jones elaborates: “We spent a lot of time making the catching game much more fun this year. Something I realized last year was that none of the games really capture receivers jumping and catching. To me, that's one of the exciting parts of football. This is an aspect of offense that we did piss-poor back then. We got a bunch of new dive moves in and then we sat down and tuned them and tuned them and finally thought, ‘Oh my God, that's a sweet-ass catch.’ From a graphical standpoint, I can't say that I've ever been more pleased with the way it came out.”

NOT JUST A VISUAL BATTLEFIELD

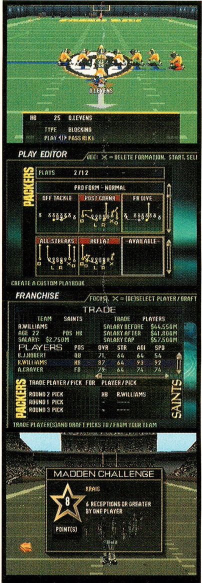
Although improving the game's graphics and game speed were a priority, gameplay issues were also addressed. “We've done a lot of things to change the gameplay—especially this year,” says Jones. “We've done more defensive adjustments, and with our being in the Bay Area, it's pretty simple to get athletes in from the 49ers and the Raiders to give us a hand. We've also had feedback from Lincoln Kennedy on blocking that helped us out a lot in improving the running game.”

Thanks to more efficient line blocking, players will find picking holes easier, and with new breakable wrap tackles, the potential for big gains increases. “We've done a lot of things to change the gameplay—especially this year,” explains Jones.

“We've tried to implement risk-reward gameplay. For every move you make, there's a countermove. If you execute the right move—say you hit a juking running back hard—you get more force fumbles, mishaps, etc. That's one of the things we wanted to achieve with risk and reward.”

Fueled by its excellent artificial intelligence and in-depth features, and punctuated by a incredible Franchise Mode, Madden football has always been a realistic football game. This year, however, Madden's designers aimed to add more lighthearted features to broaden the game's appeal. One such feature is the Madden Challenge, a game mode that lets players earn points for feats they accomplish on the gridiron. While the tasks are easy at first, offering up challenges such as having a running back gain 100 yards, more difficult ones will demand incredible feats, such as gaining 1,000 yards rushing and receiving with a running back. Once enough points are gathered, codes are given.

“They aren't crappy codes either,” Jones explains. “There's stuff like Pac-Man football where you can go out of bounds and appear on the other side of the field, to elastic walls where the sideline bounces you back in. There are various cool secret



HB 25 D.LEVENS
TYPE BLOCKING
PLAY ◄I► PASS BLK 1

PLAY EDITOR
UEE: ✕ = DELETE FORMATION. START, SEL
PACKERS
PLAYS 2/12
PRO FORM - NORMAL
OFF TACKLE
POST CORNR
FB DIVE
ALL STREAKS
HBFLAT
-AVAILABLE-
CREATE A CUSTOM PLAYBOOK

FRANCHISE
FOCUS). ✕ = (DE)SELECT PLAYER/DRAFT
TRADE
TEAM SAINTS
R.WILLIAMS
AGE 22 POS HB
SALARY: $2.750M
TRADE PLAYERS
SALARY BEFORE $44.550M
SALARY AFTER $41.800M
SALARY CAP $57.500M

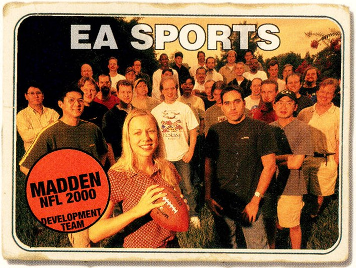
PLAYERS	POS	OVR	STR	AGI	SPD
B.J.HOBERT	QB	71	64	64	54
R.WILLIAMS	HB	87	64	93	92
A.CRAVER	FB	79	64	74	74

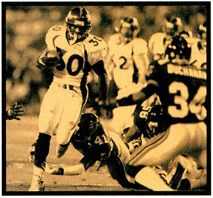
TRADE PLAYER/PICK FOR	PLAYER/PICK	
ROUND 2 PICK	HB	R.WILLIAMS
ROUND 1 PICK	-	----
ROUND 3 PICK	-	----

PACKERS
SAINTS
TRADE PLAYER(S) AND DRAFT PICKS TO/FROM YOUR TEAM

MADDEN CHALLENGE
KRAIG
8
6 RECEPTIONS OR GREATER BY ONE PLAYER
POINT(S)

Madden's feature set is unrivaled, even though GameDay is close behind, nipping at its heels. Some of the standout features (shots are in order from the top) are the ability to design plays, customizable playbooks, the ability to trade players for draft-choices and other players, and finally the addictive and very innovative “Madden Challenge.”





"Who was polygonal first? I think [EA Sports has] always been following us."
—Kelly Ryan, Director of 989 Sports Product Development

teams and players—like one team with a Roman Imperial Guard. You can even play them against any regular team. The Madden Challenge is one of the most revolutionary features to be put into football games in a long time."

AND IN THE OTHER CORNER...

989 Sports obviously begs to differ, as Kelly Ryan, director of sports product development, counters that point: "We're the first football game to be polygonal and the first with full dual commentary. We have the telestrator, Practice Mode, and Total Control Passing."

Ryan continues, now in a sarcastic tone. "We have all of these revolutionary ideas and they come up with the fantastic direct passing or Liquid AI."

Ryan has some valid points: GameDay has long been an innovator, especially graphically, starting from the day that it sprung onto the PlayStation a mere few months after the system launched. Since then, they've never looked back, continually pushing the envelope when it comes to technology and football games. While there was no doubt that GameDay was consistently the best-looking game overall, its questionable realism turned off some die-hard football fans.

That's something that the GameDay team addressed, according to Ryan. "Last year what we did with GameDay—we really tried to blow out the presentation. We did the television-style cut-ins, close-ups, added the dual booth and the color commentary. We tried to blow out the presentational value of the game. This year, we tried to get back to square one quite a bit and we're really concentrating on the gameplay. Not that we didn't last year, but we really are focusing even more of our attention on gameplay and AI—just kinda rebuilding to make sure we're ahead of the competition. We're very fortunate to have football-minded people in position here that understand coverage packages and offensive play schemes.

"You go back to the Genesis days and you have people building football games that really weren't football-minded. Nowadays, it's a true position in this development cycle to get sports-minded people dedicated to spending time with the games and building the most realistic simulation that you can."

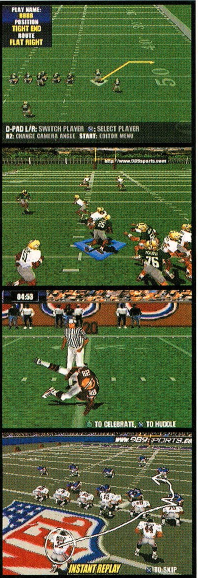
But they don't do it alone. There's lots of professional help, according to Allan Frankel, GameDay's product manager. "I can't emphasize enough how important it is when you have NFL players in here—Warren Sapp, Antonio Freeman, Mike Alstott. They really like the realism. And they enjoy this stuff because they play the games. They sit down and draw these plays and it's so important to have people that understand what they're drawing. It makes such a big difference because these players don't talk in layman's terms; they talk football."

THE THIN GAMEPLAY LINE

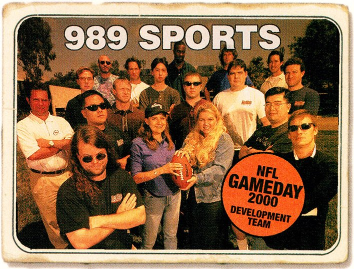
But don't expect a game mired in strategy at the expense of fun. "There is a fine line," says Ryan. "We want to be careful not to make it so realistic that the general consumer who's going to be buying our game gets lost in the process. We have to create a game that's balanced from a gameplay standpoint, from a realistic standpoint and from a simulation standpoint."

Ryan offers an example: "In the past with GameDay, if you're running a sweep, and there's a guy running close to you, if you don't execute the special move, you're done. This year, we wanted to make it feel like the play is never over. This year, you can bust out of a tackle. There's a hit and a reaction to it, and you might think that it's going to be a tackle, but he actually bounces off it and staggers and stays on his feet for that second effort. Or he might trip and retain his balance, or he might have a tackler on his back for a few yards then release him and continue. It keeps you on the edge of your seat and makes you feel like you can never ever give up on the game, because second effort is so important in sports."

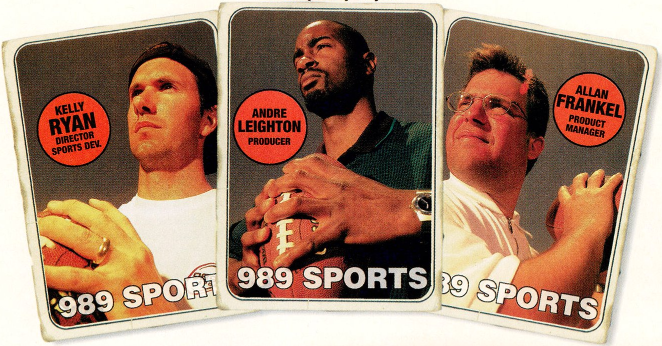
Second effort is also important in game development, and GameDay 2000 has a few new features that especially demonstrates 989 Sports' commitment to that. "We think the telestrator will blow people away," says Ryan. "It's not just chalk



While GameDay 2000's team management modes aren't quite as in-depth as Madden's, they have a basketful of innovative features such as Phil Simms using a Telestrator during the instant replays, and the ability to celebrate after every play. We're not sure that we've ever seen breakdancing after a play, however.



GameDay's Key Players



being drawn on a screen. You'll hear Phil Simms chime in with analysis telling exactly what happened in the play, with an innovative camera showing detail—not just a focus on the play of the running back or quarter back. He'll talk about the offensive linemen doing chop blocks and pulling guards and intricacies that make the NFL so fun to watch."

Other parts of the game are getting further fleshed out, such as the game's playbook. "We have over 32 NFL players designing plays for our game. We have 1,240 new plays—double the number of plays we had from last year's game," says Andre Leighton, GameDay 2000's producer. He elaborates: "All the NFL players designed our plays within the custom section of our playbooks. A lot of people think that every team should have a different playbook. I'm not a big fan of that. Because you want to be able to run the play you want, and if you want to play with the Carolina Panthers, you should be able to run plays you're comfortable with, and not have to start over completely. The custom section within our playbook gives each team a unique play structure, but it also has all the other plays that every other team has. They have a whole formation dedicated to the plays the players drew up for each team."

NEXT-GENERATION WEAPONRY

Clearly, GameDay is quickly closing the once-wide gap in features that used to separate the two games, but Ryan asserts that it's never been large enough to really put the PlayStation Madden franchise on top. "We don't look at Madden as a leader on this platform. We look at ourselves as a leader and we've never looked at Madden—from a gameplay standpoint especially. We've always pushed the envelope as far as technology is concerned—we've always been ahead of Madden. We don't look back that often. We always look ahead on how we can make GameDay better because we know we have a good game. It's just a matter of what [EA Sports is] going to do to try to keep up with us. We always learn new tricks, new things to do—we get better every year. We're always going to continue to get better on the PlayStation, although we are finally tapping out the system to a certain extent."

Ryan reads our mind, and answers our next question. "We're anxiously awaiting the next turn of football games on the new hardware platform. GameDay's our best franchise, and we're going to do what it takes to come out of the blocks when the PlayStation 2 is ready."

Hopefully that will be in time for next football season.

04:22
989SPORTS.com
02:19
ANDERSON

Continuing their tradition of delivering topnotch graphics, 989 Sports has once again made GameDay 2000 a visual treat. The new wrap-tackles, breakaway tackles, improved player models and ramped-up presentation are outstanding.

The Early Line

	Madden	GameDay
HAS BIG-NAME COMMENTATOR	Yes	Yes
...who is bloated	Yes	No
...and makes millions	Yes	No
...operates a TV Telestrator in real life	Yes	Yes
...and one for his video game too	No	Yes
LOTS OF ATHLETE INVOLVEMENT	Yes	Yes
...all of them have lots of input	No	No
...OK, a few do	Yes	Yes
HAS A FRANCHISE/GM MODE	Yes	Yes
...where the NFL bails your team out your debt	No	No
...and you can ruin your team by trading the future for Ricky Williams	Yes	No
...and you can hold cities hostage for new stadiums	No	No
...and even sign Lawrence Philips	Yes	Yes
HAS A PRACTICE MODE	Yes	Yes
...that players can skip when they holdout	No	No
...or show up 100 lbs. overweight	No	No

Reviews

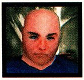
The final word—official and unbiased

Meet the Critics

Kraig Kujawa
Editor-in-Chief

Inundated by football games during this issue, Kraig had time for little else than to take an occasional break from the gridiron to look at Joe's latest wrestling creations.

Favorite Genres: Sports, Strategy
Current Favorites: Madden NFL 2000, NFL GameDay 2000, NFL Blitz 2000 (a pattern?)
Can't Wait For: Pac-Man World, PS2 stuff!
Wrestling Alias: "Kangaroo"



Joe Rybicki
Deputy Editor

Joe spent most of this month making wrestling models of everyone in the office. He was particularly disturbed by his own alter ego, and now fears a PS2 version.

Favorite Genres: Adventure, RPG, Puzzle
Current Favorites: Sled Storm, WWF Attitude, Driver, frequent flier miles
Can't Wait For: Freakin' Soul Reaver already!
Wrestling Alias: "The Prophet"

Wataru Maruyama
West Coast Editor

Wat wishes someone would make a wrestling title with all the grapplers he grew up with, like the Iron Sheik and Abdulla the Butcher. He'll have to be content with creating them on Attitude for now.

Favorite Genres: Fighting, Racing, Adventure
Current Favorites: FFVIII, Driver, Rising Wat
Can't Wait For: Grandia, Quake II, G-Police 2!
Wrestling Alias: "Dirty Rice"

Mark MacDonald
Associate Editor

Yeaaaah they come to snuff the rooster—but no he ain't gonna die! Marathon FFVIII sessions and severe jet-lag left Mark in such a daze that he even found himself attracted to Wat's freaky, vaguely femalish wrestler portrait.

Favorite Genres: Action, Adventure, RPG
Current Favorites: Final Fantasy VIII
Can't Wait For: RE3, Grandia, Quake II
Wrestling Alias: "The Rooster"

Video games saved my life

by Joe Rybicki

There's been a lot of talk lately about the supposedly dangerous effects of spending too much time playing video games. I'm not here to talk about that. Instead, I'd like to tell you a story of how video games may have saved my life.

It was a balmy June afternoon when I set off to visit my friend Lee in Denver (Hi, Lee!). Being the type to enjoy the unique experiences of road travel, I decided I'd drive the whole way from Chicago, a trip that's roughly a thousand miles. I had allotted myself two days, but seeing as how the speed limit in much of Nebraska and Colorado is 75 MPH, I figured I might be able to make it in one day if no roadside attraction caught my eye.

I was making pretty good time, too. About 100 miles into Iowa (an underrated state, in my opinion), I stopped to refuel myself with hot coffee and frosted strawberry Pop-Tarts. I was feeling good.

That's when I started hearing a strange growling sound. At first I thought it was the belching engine of the frighteningly large semi passing me on the right. Then my tire exploded.

Now, there was this giant diesel monstrosity right off the starboard bow, a sharp decline into the grassy median hard to port, and some smarmy twit in a lowrider pickup trying to drive into my trunk. And when you lose a tire off a hatchback at 80 MPH (um, I mean 65, of course, officer), you pretty much lose all meaningful control of your trajectory.

But I pulled out of it, eased off onto the shoulder and rolled safely to a stop. Why didn't I end up wedged under a semi or barrel-rolling in a ditch? Well, the superficial answer is that my reflexes are pretty quick these days (and perhaps the Pop-Tart/cappuccino rush helped a bit, too). But see, here's the thing: My reflexes used to be about as sharp as an elderly tortoise with a three-beer buzz. I used to be absolutely horrible at shooters, platform games and pretty much anything requiring split-second response.

But then I started playing video games for a living. And I noticed my reflexes improving. And what's more relevant is that I'd been playing a lot of Driver, a delightfully realistic game that's all about maintaining control of fast cars that want nothing more than to drive straight into a lightpost. And I really believe that my video game career saved me from what could have been a serious—maybe even fatal—accident. In fact, the first thing I said upon getting out of my car was, "Thank God for video games." I'm serious.

So when they try to tell you that video games are no good, make 'em play Driver. And when they turn that car into a flaming wreck, remember that if it weren't for video games, that could have been me.

Games Reviewed

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Um Jammer Lammy....118
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Box Score

It doesn't get much more simple yet effective than *OPM*'s five-disc rating system. Very few games are lucky enough to get our golden five-disc salute, but if one does, be sure to pick it up!

●○○○○ We'd rather look exactly like our wrestler alter egos than play this game.

●●○○○ Below average. There are fundamental flaws with this game; get something better.

●●●○○ A good title. It's a fun game with some flaws that can be overlooked.

●●●●○ Definitely a topnotch game. Very good and well worth your time.

●●●●● Fabulous! These are the games that really make you proud to own a PlayStation.

"Because we don't want your kids decapitating in their games if you don't want your kids decapitating in their games!"

EARLY CHILDHOOD RATING: Deemed Suitable For Children 3 Or Older. Products Carrying This Label Have Absolutely No Material That Would Be Considered Inappropriate By Parents.

EVERYONE RATING: The E Replaced The Previous K-A Rating Last Year. Suitable For Kids Ages 6 And Up, E-Rated Games May Contain Minimal Violence Or Crude Language.

TEEN RATING: Contains Suggestive Themes, Mild Or Strong Language And Animated Violence. Some Parents May Want To Supervise Children Playing T-Rated Games.

MATURE RATING: These Games Contain More Adult Themes, Such As Blood And Gore, Stronger Language And Sexual Themes. Deemed Not Suitable For Those Under 17.

ADULTS ONLY RATING: The Extreme Of The Ratings, Suitable For Adults Only. Packs Sexual Themes And Extreme Violence. Console Manufacturers Have Yet To Allow An AO-Rated Game.

ESRB Rating System: www.esrb.com

ZIFF-DAVIS
a SOFTBANK
company

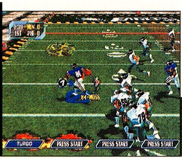
EVERYONE E CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Developer	Midway
Publisher	Midway
Genre	Sports

NFL
BLITZ 2000
PlayStation
MIDWAY

- 1-4 Players
- Memory Card 1-6 blocks
- Analog Control Compatible
- Vibration Function Compatible

NFL Blitz 2000


0:39 MIN 0
1ST PHI 0
84 MOSS
TURBO
PRESS START
PRESS START
PRESS START

PlayStation

Midway keeps the refs heading for the hills

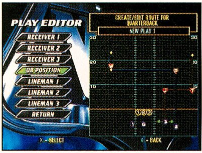
When it comes to extreme football on the PlayStation, there's just no substitute for a game of NFL Blitz. Last year's debut of the game was nothing short of amazing when it came out—the speed of the addictive gameplay and quality of the graphics pushed the PlayStation about as far as it could go. And Blitz 2000 seems to have nudged it a bit further.

The main improvements lie within the multiple layers of depth that have been added to Blitz 2000. The most significant new feature is the four-player simultaneous option, which transforms Blitz into almost an entirely new game. Being able to throw to your friend while he pushes down defenders to get open creates a lot of new dynamics. The change is so significant that it forces you to rethink the way you play, making it almost two different games in one.

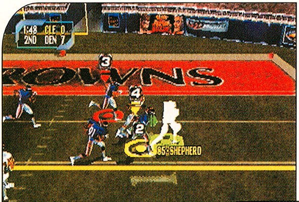
Adding even more variety and strategy to the mix is the ability of players being able to get powered-up by being "on fire" and the all-new offensive and defensive play editors. While the excellent offensive play editor adds obvious benefits, the defensive play editor can really shift the odds of winning in your favor. It's not nearly as versatile as I would like (picky stuff like it not having many options to edit zone defenses, etc.) , but it's nice to be able to mix in some defenses that your opponent has never seen. I suspect some of the limitations were done on purpose to keep the play creator simple to use. Nevertheless, fans of this series of games will enjoy having the ability to outsmart their opponent with their playmaking smarts as much as their moves on the gridiron.

The only slight disappointment I have with this game is that its graphics haven't really been improved much since last year's stellar effort. But that doesn't matter much—they were great to begin with, and the gameplay has been upgraded substantially enough for owners of the first game to pick this new one up. And if you don't have the first one, what the hell are you waiting for?

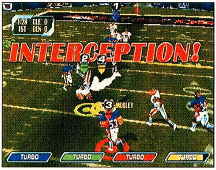
—*Kraig Kujawa*

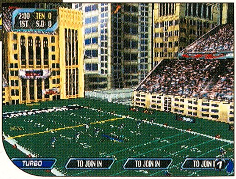

PLAY EDITOR
RECEIVER 1
RECEIVER 2
RECEIVER 3
QB POSITION
LINEMAN 1
LINEMAN 2
LINEMAN 3
RETURN
CREATE/EDIT ROUTE FOR QUARTERBACK
NEW PLAY 1
X - SELECT
BACK

The new offensive play editor (above) and the ability to become "on fire" (left) turn Blitz into an entirely new game.


1:48 CLE 0
2ND DEN 7
BROWNS
85 SHEPHERD
TURBO
TURBO

G.B 24
4TH OAK 16
TURBO
PLEASE WAIT
PLEASE WAIT
PLEASE WAIT


1:28 CLE 0
1ST DEN 0
INTERCEPTION!
MOBLEY
TURBO
TURBO
TURBO
TURBO


2:00 TEN 0
1ST S.D 0
TURBO
TO JOIN IN
TO JOIN IN
TO JOIN IN

Lots of new extravagant stadiums give the game a little more aesthetic variety (above).

Box Score

Pros

- Fast gameplay
- Lots of extras
- A few new gameplay additions really add some spice to the game
- Icon passing option is a helpful feature

Cons

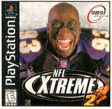
- Graphics haven't been improved much since last year.

"The gameplay has been upgraded substantially enough for owners of the first game to pick this new one up."

Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine
● ● ● ● ●
Rating

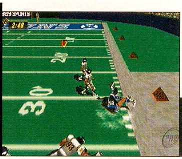
EVERYONE
E
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Developer	989 Sports
Publisher	989 Studios
Genre	Sports



- 1 or 2 Players
- Memory Card 1~6 blocks
- Analog Control Compatible
- Vibration Function Compatible

NFL Xtreme 2



PlayStation

More features doesn't mean more fun

There's nothing worse than forced humor, and NFL Xtreme 2 is a perfect example of why that's the truth. From the opening whistle to the final hit, there's nothing but cheese spread liberally on this game's feeble gridiron.

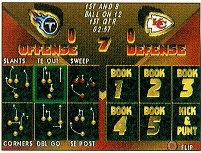
989 Sports is making a lot of noise about NFL Xtreme 2's implementation of motion-captured NFL players, trash talking, and lots of post-play extra-curricular action—but none of it helps this game a bit. Even if those things were executed well, they aren't nearly as important as having refined and intuitive gameplay in the grand scheme of things—something NFL Xtreme 2 is almost devoid of.

From the get-go, the playbook is messy and hard to understand because the plays are vaguely grouped in "books," making it hard to jump in and find what you're looking for. It's a real pain in the ass when you want to quickly call an offensive play. And trust me, you won't play this game long enough to memorize them. Even though this game breaks all the rules, maybe it should keep a few, such as not having offensive linemen go out for passes. It's just one of the reasons that makes the plays look like an utter mess.

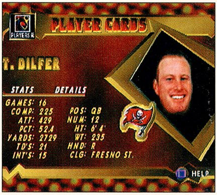
Even if you can tolerate Xtreme 2's playbook, the unpredictable animations (such as players jumping way up and backward to catch an easy pass, making you lose yards), repetitive taunting and choppy animations immediately begin wearing on the nerves. After you see your player take off his helmet for the 10th time in 15 plays with horrible "music" in the background, you'll be ready to tear your hair out.

What this game needs is an entirely new approach. Even though it is marginally better than last year's Xtreme and shows flashes of promise, 989 Sports should go back to the basics and then pile the extras on afterward. Right now NFL Xtreme 2 seems like it's trying to beat Blitz by having more "features," but that never wins over gameplay on this battlefield.

—Kraig Kujawa



The convoluted playbook (above) and the player photo of Trent Dilfer (left) are two of the scarier things from NFL Xtreme 2.



PLAYER CARDS

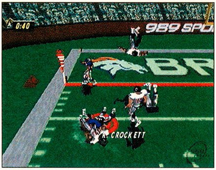
T. DILFER

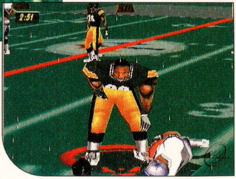
STATS

GAMES: 16
COMP: 225
ATT: 429
PCT: 52.4
YARDS: 2729
TD'S: 21
INT'S: 15

DETAILS

POS: QB
NUM: 12
HT: 6' 4"
WT: 235
HND: R
CLG: FRESNO ST.





The player mocking would have been much more effective if it didn't happen after nearly every single play (above).

Box Score

Pros

- Has more features than most games in this genre

Cons

- Really cheesy audio
- The plays and playbook are hard to understand and execute
- Choppy animations
- Ugly menus, front-end

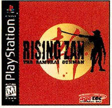
"Even though it is marginally better than last year's Xtreme, 989 Sports needs to go back to the basics."

Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine

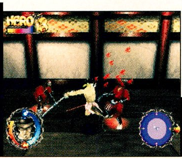
Rating

MATURE M AGES 17+ CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Developer	UEP Systems
Publisher	Agetec
Genre	Action



1 Player
Memory Card 2 blocks
Analog Controller Compatible



Rising Zan

It's Good To Be The Super Ultra Sexy Hero

Think for a second and hum Lara Croft's theme song. You can't because she doesn't have one, but Zan does. In the same vein as PaRappa (who just happens to have a theme song of his own), the samurai gunman Rising Zan isn't your typical hero. He's sort of vain, has identity problems and people think he's strange. He does save the day, and in the end, that's what really matters. The story line and the theme song are integral to the enjoyment of the game, so if it isn't your cup of tea, Zan doesn't really offer more than most action titles currently available.

Even so, I should mention that the gameplay is very sharp, with a combination of gun and sword action that is highly original and well executed. You have basic attacks with each weapon, combination attacks that alternate between weapons and super attacks that will drain your power meter. Striking an equal balance between the weapons is key to getting a better level ranking. The levels are diverse, ranging from standard Western motifs like towns and coal mines to more Eastern structures like temples and kabuki theaters.

The graphics are well done in spots, but other areas have noticeable glitches that make situations tougher than they need to be. The real culprit is the camera, which has a tough time giving you the best view of the action. You can manually reset the camera behind your character as well as lock onto an enemy to keep them in your sites, but it all depends on your proximity to walls and other obstacles.

With a longer adventure and a better camera, Rising Zan could almost have warranted another full disc in rating. As it is, the game is very enjoyable and retains a high replay value because of its rating system. And when you unlock the female character, the story changes in many spots with the high point being the hilarious new ending. The fact that the theme song comes on when you finish off a boss is reason enough to make it a must-play.

—Wataru Maruyama

The bonuses you unlock for beating the game seem more like punishment for the characters (above).

There's nothing like some good old-fashioned mine cart action to change the pace of a game (above). Make sure to slow down so you have a better chance at hitting the track lever. The earlier track changes give you extra life and a shot at freeing some prisoners. The last ones are required in order to advance.

Box Score

Pros
- Very original
- Cool new gameplay elements
- Catchy theme song
- Levels are diverse

Cons
- Camera is problematic
- A few graphical glitches
- The game should be longer

"The fact that the theme song comes on when you finish off a boss is reason enough to make it a must-play"

Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine

● ● ● ● ○

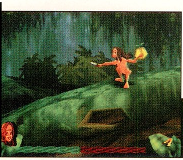
Rating

EVERYONE
E
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

1 Player
Memory Card 1 block
Analog Control Compatible
Vibration Function Compatible

Developer	Disney Int.
Publisher	Sony CEA
Genre	Action

Tarzan



PlayStation

Beautiful graphics, but some ugly gameplay

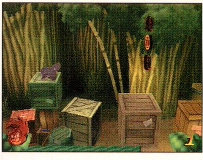
I really enjoyed Hercules, Eurocom's last Disney platformer, so I was looking forward to Tarzan with a good deal of eagerness and some admittedly high expectations. I'm sorry to report that the game, though solid, doesn't quite live up to the standard set by Hercules.

Now, visually the game is simply gorgeous. The jungle environments are rich and convincing, due in part to all the animal activity going on in the background. The characters are excellent representations of their film counterparts, and for the most part are realistic, smoothly shaded polygonal figures. And the character animation is exceptional.

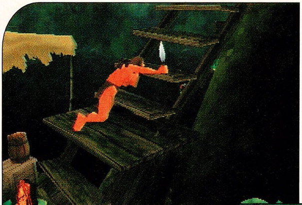
The problem is, a lot of this graphical richness gets in the way of gameplay. For one thing, the detailed animations cause some serious lag in terms of control, especially in attempting to execute attacks. It takes a significant amount of time, for example, for Tarzan to take out and throw the fruit that's his primary means of attack; when you've got a fierce lemur (well, I'm assuming they're fierce since they hurt Tarzan if he comes in contact with them; personally I find them quite loveable) barreling in your direction, that little lag feels like forever.

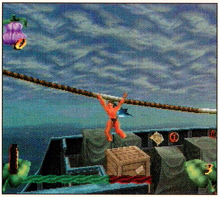
Plus, the "two-and-a-half-D" polygonal environment, though it adds to the visual richness, causes problems in the "tree-surfing" areas, since the shifting camera almost never offers a view far enough ahead to allow you to maneuver Tarzan out of the way of the many obstacles. It can also be hard to distinguish between objects in the background and in the foreground, which can lead to some unexpected trouble if you're thinking an enemy creature is safely restricted to the scenery.

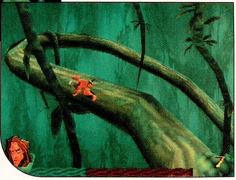
None of this kills the enjoyment of Tarzan (especially given the refreshing variety of gameplay elements sprinkled throughout the game), but it does add some unnecessary frustration to what could have been an excellent platformer. If you enjoyed the film you'll want to add this to your collection; others should probably try a rental first. *—Joe Rybicki*

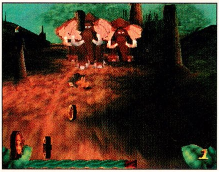


Since the majority of the game is set in the jungle, things don't really start to get visually interesting until Tarzan ventures into areas populated by humans (left).









Though the jungle environments are simply beautiful, the overwhelmingly green setting does get a little old after awhile (above).

Box Score

Pros

- Lots of variety
- Top-notch graphics
- Represents the film well

Cons

- Lag in attacks is extremely frustrating!
- The camera is useless in some areas
- The game makes you kill loveable jungle creatures!

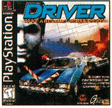
"The game, though solid, doesn't quite live up to the standard set by Hercules."

Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine

● ● ● ◐ ○

Rating

TEEN
T
AGES 13+
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB



1 or 2 Players

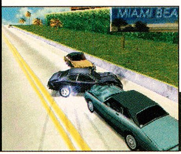
Memory Card 1 block

Analog Control Compatible

Vibration Function Compatible

Developer	Reflections
Publisher	GT Interactive
Genre	Action

Driver



One of the most entertaining car games around

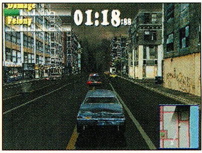
I wish there were more games like Driver in the world. Released with a minimum of marketing hype, the game is nevertheless excellent, with a load of extra modes, dozens of (mostly) diverse missions, and some truly innovative features. Developers, take note: Fresh ideas can do as well as sequels!

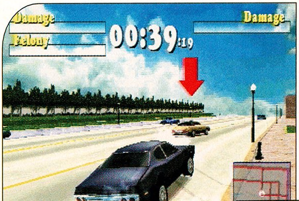
The centerpiece of Driver is, of course, the driving engine, and it's in most ways the best engine out there in terms of balancing realism and fun. But calling the game realistic isn't quite accurate; the cars don't necessarily handle like the Honda you drive to work (although your Honda may be spunkier than mine), but rather like the cars you see in any early '80s action movie, or any episode of *Starsky and Hutch*. Sharp turns are accompanied by a satisfying power slide and squealing of tires; two-wheeled turns are not uncommon; rainy New York streets are an ice rink and San Francisco hills are a playground.

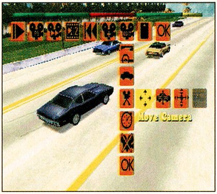
That brings up another great feature of Driver: The game takes place in Miami, San Francisco, Los Angeles and New York City, and each city is modeled after its real-life counterpart. And while the streets aren't map-perfect, you'll at least be able to find your way around if you're familiar with the general layout of the cities.

In addition to the main story mode (in which you take the role of an undercover cop infiltrating the underworld of organized crime), Driver features a bunch of extra modes, including a collection of mini-games, a training curriculum and even the ability to just drive around the cities with no particular mission. Also of note is the Director mode, which lets you arrange the replay of your most recent mission using unlimited camera angles to highlight the key moments.

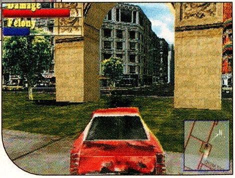
Driver does have flaws, including noticeable slowdown with weather effects on or lots of traffic, and severely varying levels of difficulty between the missions. With a bit more polish, this could have been a five-disc game; as it is it's still quite exceptional. If you drive, you'll enjoy this game. *—Joe Rybicki*

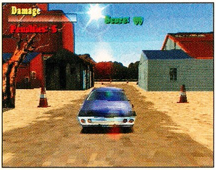






One of the most innovative features of Driver is the Director mode (left), which lets you design your own replay reel. Unfortunately, one of the most basic necessities for this sort of thing—the ability to rewind to specific segments—is inexplicably absent.





Driver features a gruelling training mode to give players a chance to get the hang of handling these muscle cars on a variety of different terrains (left).

Box Score

Pros

- Exceptionally entertaining game engine
- It's based in real cities!
- Plenty of extra modes
- Director mode

Cons

- Generally unpolished
- Some noticeable slowdown
- Why can't you rewind in Director's mode?!

"The centerpiece of Driver is, of course, the driving engine, and it's in most ways the best engine out there in terms of balancing realism and fun."

Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine

● ● ● ● ○

Rating

RATING PENDING
RP
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Developer	Acclaim
Publisher	Acclaim
Genre	Sports

PlayStation
WWF
ATTITUDE
Get it
ACCLAIM SPORTS

1~4 Players
Memory Card 1 block
Vibration Function Compatible

WWF Attitude

MIGHTYMOSH
9:01
MARK HENRY

PlayStation

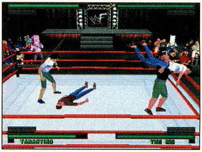
Plenty of brawn to back up the attitude

I should make it clear from the beginning that I'm not the world's biggest wrestling fan. I haven't followed the, um, sport since the late '80s, when Hogan was still a Hulk and Ric Flair was more wrestler than businessman. But I've always had a special place in my heart for quality wrestling games, and Attitude is a fine example of this genre.

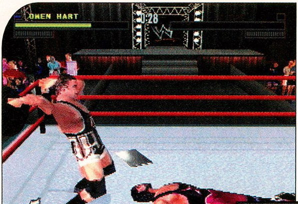
For me (not being familiar with all these new whippersnappers in the WWF) the most entertaining feature by far of Attitude is the Create-a-Wrestler mode. There is something so satisfying in being able to put yourself and your friends—or enemies—into a game and then put your digital alter egos (I call mine "Mini Me") through a grudge match. And Attitude's take on this concept exhibits an exhausting thoroughness that's present throughout the game: In addition to dictating your character's appearance, you can also pick every move in his (or her) repertoire, and even choose his voice, entrance music and crowd response.

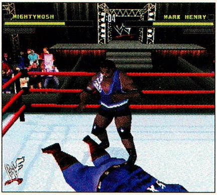
Once you're satisfied with your character (or if you want to wimp out and choose a premade wrestler) you get to choose what kind of match you want (i.e., Vs., Battle Royal, Triangle, etc.) and then dictate match length, win conditions and nearly any other option you can think of. Including multiplayer modes, there are a staggering 24 different match types. You can even design your own Pay-Per-View event!

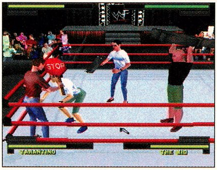
With so much effort devoted to the excellent array of options, you'd almost expect the actual game engine to be subpar, but it's actually quite adequate. Sure, it could be faster, and the moves could be a bit more intuitive, but the only really significant problems with the engine are technical ones: The collision is sometimes *way* off, often allowing an opponent to clock you from halfway across the ring; and in matches of more than four wrestlers you get *serious* slowdown as the game loads a new character. I'm still looking forward to THQ's Toukon Retsuden-based WWF game, but this should keep wrestling fans busy until then. ***—Joe Rybicki***

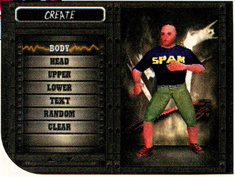


What's the best way to settle office disputes? With a Battle Royal, of course! Just create wrestlers that resemble you and your coworkers and get those work aggressions out safely and privately (above)!









Though the Create-a-Wrestler mode (above) is staggering in its options, we would have liked to be able to adjust height and weight incrementally. We also need baggy jeans and untucked shirts to represent our office environment accurately. (I, for example, have never worn capri pants in my life, but the shorts options are basically either these knickers or a disturbing pair of hot pants.)

Box Score

Pros

- Mind-boggling Create-a-Wrestler mode
- Amazing number of play modes and options
- Adequate engine with lots of different moves

Cons

- Some collision problems
- Severe slowdown while loading extra characters
- Moves could be more intuitive

"Attitude's take on the Create-a-Wrestler concept exhibits an exhausting thoroughness that's present throughout the game."

Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine

● ● ● ● ○

Rating

EVERYONE E CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Um Jammer LAMMY
PlayStation

1 or 2 Players
Memory Card 1 block
Vibration Function Compatible

Developer	NanaOn-Sha
Publisher	Sony CEA
Genre	Misc.

Um Jammer Lammy

R L R L R
COOL
GOOD
BAD
AWFUL
22
before an angel comes to take me round and round

PlayStation

Weirdness overwhelms PaRappa's world

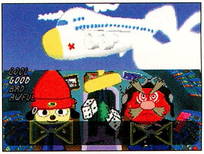
If you've been a long-time reader of *OPM*, you may know that I loved PaRappa the Rapper. So I was excited to get my hands on PaRappa's sequel, Um Jammer Lammy, expecting more of that odd visual style, more general weirdness and especially more unforgettable songs. Well...I guess two out of three ain't bad.

Lammy features the return of Rodney A. Greenblat's unmistakable graphic design (useless trivia: PaRappa isn't Greenblat's first musical work; he did the cover art for They Might Be Giants' debut album), which places two-dimensional cartoon characters in 3D environments. And it ups the ante in terms of strangeness; the game is just plain bizarre in nearly every way, from inexplicable lyrics like "I thought milk was pink" to the many odd non sequiturs featuring Joe Chin, the antagonist of the previous game.

But the game centers around music, and this is where the biggest problem arises. First of all, for the most part the songs just...well, they stink. That's a huge disappointment for me, seeing as how PaRappa's tunes were so catchy. I give the songwriters credit for trying out different styles, but none of the tracks are exceptional and many are jumbled messes. Now, this may be because the developers were trying to make the game more challenging, and they figured throwing in lots of things that don't make sense musically would help. They were right; the songs are much more challenging and complex than in PaRappa.

Unfortunately, this also emphasizes a problem that many had with the first game: The rating you get for your performance seems to have little (if anything) to do with how good your performance sounded. After playing through the stages several times the rating starts to seem completely random.

The game does include lots of extra modes (including the ability to play as PaRappa), and the guitar work is definitely unique, but as fun as it is it's still a significant disappointment. *—Joe Rybicki*

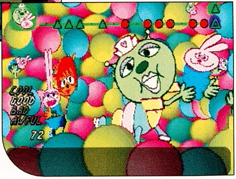


The nifty thing about playing as PaRappa (above) is that the songs are different; instead of Lammy's guitar-driven pop and rock, PaRappa gets soulful, R&B remixes of the same songs.

MilkCan
COOL
GOOD
BAD
AWFUL
718

COOL
GOOD
BAD
AWFUL
835

BITE-ME
C'mon, let's make a guitar.



The above scene is one of the strangest things you will ever see in a video game: Lammy plays guitar on a baby rabbit while a demon-voiced, regurgitating caterpillar shouts "NOW PUT THESE KIDS TO SLEEP, WILL YA?" It's disturbing.

Box Score

Pros

- Same odd graphic style
- Some familiar characters
- Extra modes, like two-player versus and co-op

Cons

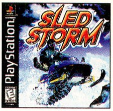
- The songs are a serious disappointment
- The story makes no sense
- "Leave it to Lammy!" not nearly as catchy as "I gotta believe!"

"For the most part the songs just...well, they stink."

Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine

● ● ● ◐ ○

Rating



1~4 Players
Memory Card 1 block
Analog Control Compatible
Vibration Function Compatible

Developer EA Canada
Publisher Electronic Arts
Genre Racing

Sled Storm

position time
4
points lap #
1 3
24 mph

PlayStation

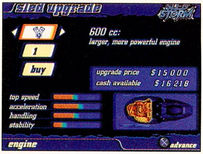
Hot racing on frozen tracks

OK, so "extreme sports" games are getting a little old these days, and I'm as tired of snowboarding games as the next reviewer. But EA has come up with an extreme sport that hasn't been done before on the PlayStation, and they've done a darned good job turning it into an entertaining racer.

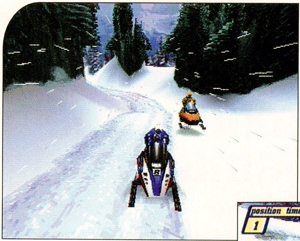
Having once actually gone on a snowmobiling excursion, I was skeptical that Sled Storm would be able to accurately re-create the unique feel of driving these surprisingly unstable machines. But EA managed to capture the sensation well; not only do the riders react accurately to hard turns and steep inclines, the sleds handle noticeably differently on various terrains. Softer snow will cause the sled to dig in a bit, for example, and the vehicles even seem to move differently when the front skis are on one surface and the back tread is on another (like when you're riding over a protruding ridge of rock).

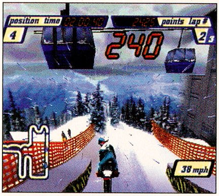
The game includes Open Mountain and Super Snocross circuits, and the track design (especially on the Open Mountain courses) is excellent. Many tracks are surprisingly long, and all have a ton of shortcuts and alternate routes; some of the better-hidden routes even cut significant time off of your run. And, of course, there are loads of insane jumps to give you a chance to show off your trick skills—which is a good thing since the game uses trick points as bonus cash, awarding money equal to one-tenth your trick score.

I just wish that either the game included more tracks or the CPU opponents were a bit more intelligent; it only took me an afternoon to complete the whole Open Mountain circuit (you need to place first every time in order to progress; you get three tries per track), and though adding the Snocross circuit helps, it's really the Open Mountain that's the main draw here. The game also slows down a bit while racing at night or against a human opponent, which is unfortunate. Nevertheless, the racing is so entertaining that I'm happy to recommend it. *—Joe Rybicki*


sled upgrade
Sled Storm
600 cc:
larger, more powerful engine
1
buy
upgrade price $15000
cash available $16218
top speed
acceleration
handling
stability
engine
advance

If you place first in an Open Mountain race you'll be awarded cash which you can use to upgrade your sled (above). Ration your resources wisely and you can end up with a completely maxed-out ride by the end of the tour.




position time 02:00:40
2425 points lap #
4
2 3
240
38 mph

position time 02:25:80
650 points lap #
1
1 3
15 mph

position time 03:53:76
2425 points lap #
4
2 3
52 mph

Once completing the Open Mountain circuit, you'll be rewarded with the Storm Sled (left), a highly maneuverable (and proportionately unstable), very powerful machine with a single ski at the front. You won't believe the air time you can get with this sick puppy.

Box Score

Pros

- Nicely realistic
- Well-designed tracks with lots of alternate routes, which adds to replay value
- A good number of tracks
- Good upgrade system

Cons

- A bit too easy to beat
- Noticeable slowdown in night and multiplayer races

"EA has come up with an extreme sport that hasn't been done before, and they've done a darned good job turning it into an entertaining racer."

Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine

● ● ● ● ○

Rating

EVERYONE
E
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

THE NEXT TETRIS
PlayStation

1 or 2 Players
Memory Card 1~6 blocks
Analog Controller Compatible

Developer	BPS/Atari
Publisher	Hasbro
Genre	Puzzle/Strategy

The Next Tetris

Maybe I'll wait for the next, Next Tetris

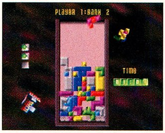
It was apparent that the variations on Tetris were starting to wear thin starting with the likes of Hatris. To its credit, The Next Tetris attempts to follow the core rules of what makes people love the game without adding alienating elements.

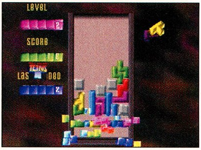
I have to admit that I hated The Next Tetris for the first few hours of play. The poor graphics, the weird "gravity" effects and custom rules were annoying. Like most folks, I just wanted to play Tetris. Good old reliable Tetris.

I did finally manage to figure out how to make all kinds of crazy combinations using just colors and other setup methods which stared to change the game completely. Yes, I started to really get into it. I gave the game every chance to win me over. Going head-to-head in the newer mode is much better than the standard "who lasts longer" contest of the classic. The Next Tetris mode is quite good when you learn it, but classic Tetris just sucks. The colors are bland and block's animations are annoying.

Purchasing a Tetris title, say because you want one for your PlayStation, seems like a no-brainer. Just be warned that this particular version may not be what you're looking for.

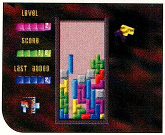
—*Wataru Maruyama*





The game boasts gravity effects, but what you get are blocks that jiggle like they're made of Jello. Takes a bit of getting used to if you're the type who easily gets nauseous.

LEVEL
SCORE
LAST



Box Score

Pros
- It's Tetris
- Multiple play modes
- Head to head play is very competitive

Cons
- It's still Tetris
- Really average graphics
- New rules tough to get used to
- The way blocks jiggle like Jello

● ● ● ○ ○

OPM Rating

MATURE
M
AGES 17+
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

SOUL OF THE SAMURAI
PlayStation

1 Player
Memory Card 1~6 blocks
Analog Control Compatible
Vibration Function Compatible

Developer	KCESapporo
Publisher	Konami
Genre	Action

Soul of the Samurai

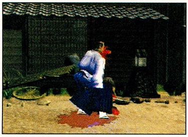
If it had honor, this game would kill itself

The list of failed adventure games patterned after Resident Evil is not a short one, and it just got one title longer with Konami's disappointing Soul of the Samurai.

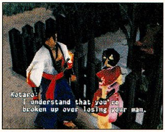
The graphics are universally poor. Characters are blocky and badly textured, and the backgrounds look drab and blurry, with no animation and almost no interactive elements to add to their believability. Imagine 3D models from a first-generation PlayStation game (say, *Toshinden*), pasted on top of some starving artist's paintings of medieval Japan that got left out in the rain, and you've got the idea.

Both of the heroes you can choose from have a wide range of moves, including special weapons, blocks and some dramatic attack combos, but problems with the controls destroy any potential the game might have had here. The sluggish response time of your on-screen alter-ego makes precise movement almost impossible, and along with some issues "aiming" your character to hit your enemies (especially against multiple opponents and bosses), takes most of the fun out of combat. Maybe in another game this could be overlooked, but with little story and no puzzle elements to speak of, it's the death knell for Soul of the Samurai.

—*Mark MacDonald*



A dramatic re-enactment of my reaction to Soul of the Samurai's terrible graphics.



Kotaro:
I understand that you're broken up over losing your man.

Box Score

Pros
- Two characters, each with their own story line
- Lots of moves, combos and weapons

Cons
- Blurry, lifeless graphics
- Awkward and unresponsive controls
- Too short

● ◐ ○ ○ ○

OPM Rating

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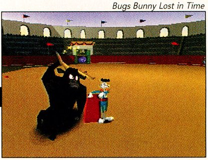
Review Recap

The final word—official and unbiased

A roundup of the most notable games of recent months

Bugs Bunny Lost in Time



Ape Escape

The first PlayStation game to *require* an analog controller, Ape Escape sets a new standard with its ingenious and precise controls. The huge number of different weapons, moves and vehicles make this one of the most diverse platformers out there. The game does suffer from some slowdown and typical 3D camera issues, but it's otherwise excellent.

OPM Rating ●●●●●

Bugs Bunny Lost in Time

This is as close as you're likely to get to actually playing a Looney Tunes cartoon on the present hardware. The designers (who, surprisingly, were also responsible for the lackluster Jersey Devil) obviously put a lot of effort into reproducing the license faithfully; any fan of Looney Tunes will love it. Unfortunately, the game's too short for experienced gamers.

OPM Rating ●●●◐○

Ehrgeiz

Although the fast, furious, fully 3D engine may not be for everyone, Ehrgeiz packs in enough extras—especially the huge Quest mode and the ability to play as characters from FFVII—to keep players coming back for more. It may not be the deepest fighter out there, but it's a blast to play.

OPM Rating ●●●◐○

Elmo's Letter Adventure

Though cute, this game is too repetitive and linear. This may be good for basic alphabet skills, but psychologists say this sort of restrictive gameplay is counterproductive to a child's sense of empowerment. Plus, it's too simple to be truly educational.

OPM Rating ●◐○○○

Gex 3: Deep Cover Gecko

The third installment in the Gex saga suffers a bit from repetitive, monotonous combat and a fair share of graphic and camera glitches. But the humor of the series is here in full force, and a ton of levels and secrets help make up for the monotony.

OPM Rating ●●●◐○

Jade Cocoon

The newest RPG effort from Crave features an excellent story, superb graphics and a well-done world design. The battle system, however, may simply be too tedious for most RPG fans, as it features Monster Rancher-like elements of creature training and tending. If you're into that sort of thing, Jade Cocoon is for you; others may want to rent first to see if they have the patience.

OPM Rating ●●●◐○

Legend of Legaia

SCEA's RPG is a solid, entertaining game that punches a lot of classic RPG buttons while rarely sliding into cliché. The combat engine employs interesting hand-to-hand and magic systems, but where Legaia really shines is in the writing and character development. While the too-frequent (and too-lengthy) battles can be frustrating, Legaia offers a satisfying quest for any RPG fan.

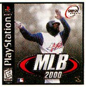
OPM Rating ●●●●○

Lunar: Silver Star Story Complete

This reworked version of the classic Sega CD RPG puts most of today's "advanced" RPGs to shame with a great story, superb writing and an excellent battle system. Sure, the average graphics may look dated to those used to modern 32-bit RPGs, but that's not what you play an RPG for anyway, is it? The game package even comes with a bunch of nifty extras. Lunar will remind you why you started playing RPGs in the first place.

OPM Rating ●●●●◐

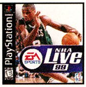
MLB 2000



Although MLB 99 was a good game, this year's version fails to make any significant improvements. The game still has its share of bugs and AI issues, and though it's a solid game, it's a shame it couldn't have been more improved.

OPM Rating ●●●●○

NBA Live 99



EA's newest installment in the Live series sports AI improved from the previous version, loads of options and features, and improved graphics that actually show the players' emotions through an almost creepy use of facial expressions. The frame-rate could use some work, though, and because of the NBA lockout, the rosters are woefully out of date. Still, it's one of the best b-ball games yet.

OPM Rating ●●●●○

Need For Speed: High Stakes

Electronic Arts added even more interesting features to the already-substantial Need for Speed III, and the result is an all-around excellent racer with a ton of different

recap pick of the month

R-Type Delta

This is the first game to challenge Einhänder's dominance of the shooter category on the PlayStation, and it does it well. First off, it looks simply beautiful, with crisp polygonal graphics, beautiful backgrounds, huge multi-leveled boss creatures and awesome weapon effects and explosions.

But what makes Delta truly great has nothing to do with how it looks. Like previous titles in the R-Type series, Delta is all about gameplay; the way you can charge your force pod by destroying enemies and the option to attach it to the front or back of your ship or have it roam freely gives this shooter an aspect of planning and strategy that most games in the genre lack. The inclusion of three very different ships (plus a hidden fourth) makes for more replay value than the average title in the genre. Shooter fans, don't miss this game.

OPM Rating ●●●●◐

modes. One of the most interesting of these is the chance to win new vehicles off a friend in head-to-head competition. Only the jittery frame-rate in Hot Pursuit Mode mars this fine game.

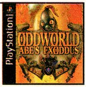
OPM Rating ●●●●◐

NFL Blitz

"Oh, that HAD to hurt!" To everyone's surprise, the console version actually more than does justice to Midway's arcade hit. Throw in Dual Shock support and Tournament and Season modes and you've got one excellent port on your hands. Fast, addictive, brutal and just plain fun.

OPM Rating ●●●●●

Oddworld: Abe's Exoddus



The loveable Abe returns in what amounts to little more than a collection of new levels to add to the excellent Abe's Oddysee. Further variety in environments helps differentiate between the games, however, as does the ability to possess more creatures, the increased GameSpeak vocabulary and the vector of Mudokon emotions. The much-needed Quiksave eliminates the pesky checkpoints of the previous game. An all-around topnotch title.

OPM Rating ●●●●◐

R4: Ridge Racer Type 4

R4 modifies the challenging Namco racing engine to make Drift driving much more forgiving. Unfortunately, this makes the game as a whole much easier, lowering the replay value. But the unbelievable graphics and multiplayer options make R4 worthwhile anyway.

OPM Rating ●●●●○

Silent Hill

When Konami decides to do a horror adventure in the vein of Resident Evil, they don't mess around: Silent Hill is perhaps the most disturbing game on the PlayStation. Although the controls could have used a *lot* of work, the creepy story, multiple endings and assortment of extras make the game worthwhile. Buy it for the sheer atmosphere and you'll find yourself leaving a light on at night. Not for the faint of heart.

OPM Rating ●●●●○

Star Ocean The 2nd Story

This exceptional RPG is packed with options and extras that add incredible depth to the gameplay. The sweeping story is carried along by writing that is, sadly, only adequate in most areas. But the unusual battle system keeps the game moving along nicely, and the fine prerendered scenes are a joy to look at.

OPM Rating ●●●●◐

Street Sk8er

The PlayStation's first dedicated skateboarding game leaves quite a bit to be desired. Although EA manages to come through on most elements of skater atmosphere, the trick system is far too simplistic and the game in general simply isn't challenging enough to warrant more than a rental. Great soundtrack, though.

OPM Rating ●●◐○○

Street Fighter Alpha 3

This is without a doubt the best installment in the Street Fighter series. Remarkably faithful to the arcade version, the home edition also includes a World Tour Mode, which lets players tour the world to build up their favorite characters' abilities. To top it off, a ton of extras await the diligent player. All in all, for 2D PlayStation fighting this is as good as it gets.

OPM Rating ●●●●●

Syphon Filter

This game of high-tech espionage has drawn more than a few comparisons to Metal Gear Solid, but easily stands on its own merits. Although the game suffers from minor graphics and control issues, these pale in comparison with the imaginative level design and spectacular AI. A good bet for those seeking a thinking man's action game.

OPM Rating ●●●●○

Triple Play 2000

EA Sports has finally managed to improve the frame-rate problems that plagued previous Triple Play titles, and has come up with this year's baseball game to beat. A revamped, simplified interface makes the game much more intuitive, and the more dramatic TV-style presentation adds plenty of ambience. Check it out.

OPM Rating ●●●●◐

WCW/nWo Thunder

This is the unfortunate result of all the faction-and-alliance melodrama that's made wrestling so popular of late. Thunder includes lots of treats for the die-hard fan, but fails to deliver anything resembling fun. Bad AI, horrible controls and a useless camera make this one for avid fans only.

OPM Rating ●○○○○

Xenogears

Square proves they still got it with an immense RPG with an entirely unique engine and loads of other innovations. A great story, a necessity for any good RPG, is complemented by great graphics. A worthwhile experience for any RPG-er!

OPM Rating ●●●●○

Ratings at a Glance

Ace Combat 2	●●●●●
Activision Classics	●●○○○
Bloody Roar 2	●●●●○
Brave Fencer Musashi	●●●●○
Breath of Fire III	●●●◐○
C: Contra Adventure	●◐○○○
Civilization II	●●●●◐
Contender	●●●●○
Crash: WARPED	●●●●●
Dead or Alive	●●●●◐
FIFA 99	●●●●◐
Final Fantasy VII	●●●●●
G.Darius	●●●●○
Gex: Enter the Gecko	●●●◐○
Gran Turismo	●●●●●
Guardian's Crusade	●●●○○
Hot Shots Golf	●●●●○
Judge Dredd	●◐○○○
Kartia	●●●●○
Madden NFL 99	●●●●◐
Metal Gear Solid	●●●●●
MLB 99	●●●●○
Mortal Kombat 4	●●●◐○
NCAA Football 99	●●●●◐
Need For Speed III	●●●●○
NFL GameDay 99	●●●●○
NFL Xtreme	●●○○○
NHL 99	●●●●◐
Parasite Eve	●●●●○
Pitfall 3D	●●○○○
Point Blank	●●●◐○
Rogue Trip	●●●◐○
Rollcage	●●●◐○
SaGa Frontier	●●●◐○
San Francisco Rush	●●●○○
Soul Blade	●●●●◐
Spyro the Dragon	●●●●○
Tekken 3	●●●●●
Tomb Raider III	●●●◐○
Tomba!	●●●●○
Twisted Metal III	●●◐○○
Vigilante 8	●●●●○

JADE COCOON

STORY OF THE TAMAMAYU

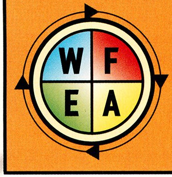
Jade Cocoon veers from the traditional path which most RPGs follow. The game focuses on the collection and merger of Minions rather than building up your main character. Use the maps, general walkthrough and strategies to successfully maneuver past the obstacles you encounter.

KNOWING THE BASICS

Gaining Experience

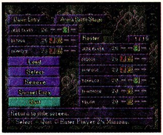
Unlike most traditional RPGs, you won't be able to build your main character into some unstoppable fighting machine. Jade Cocoon puts a different spin on things. Killing a Minion with your main character is not at all beneficial, adding nothing to your experience points. Capturing Minions, on the other hand, will increase your experience level. This allows you to capture high-level Minions you encounter as you progress through the game.

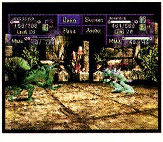
Understanding The Four Elements



The Minions you encounter throughout the game will be based in one of the four elements– Earth, Water, Fire or Air. Each individual element has a distinct advantage over one of the other three. Simply put, Fire beats Air, Air beats Earth, Earth beats Water and Water beats Fire. However, this doesn't mean that your other Minions are ineffective, just less effective. Keep this in mind when choosing your Minion for battle.

Multiplayer Battle Mode





Wouldn't it be cool if you could put your best Minion creations up against your friend's (who swears his are better than yours)? Well, dream no further. Once you completed the Story Mode of Jade Cocoon you will have the option to enter the Arena Battle Stage. Select your best three characters and load them up for a one-on-one confrontation. At the start of the battle you will be given the option to switch in Minions during the fight and to randomly shuffle the order your Minions will attack in. The battle will be decided when one player losses all three of his Minions.

Selling Cocoons For Yan

Unlike most RPGs, Jade Cocoon won't grant you a bag of gold after every successful battle. To earn money, or Yan, you will need to capture Minions and take them to Mahbu to be spun. Once spun into silk, they can be sold at the shop for various sums of Yan. The price you receive is contingent upon the level of experience each captured Minion has. The following chart shows the value of the seven various silks.

How many will you trade?
Lily Silk
Select
Quit

Cloud Silk	-	**150 yan**
Thunder Silk	-	**225 yan**
Lily Silk	-	**375 yan**
Pearl Silk	-	**600 yan**
First Snow Silk	-	**1125 yan**
Angelwing Silk	-	**3000 yan**
Moonlight Silk	-	**7500 yan**

MINIONS OF JADE COCOON

You can return to status screen with the △ button.

Equipped
Stored
Quit R1 R2 Zoom

You can return to status screen with the △ button.

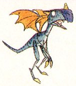
Equipped
Stored
Quit R1 R2 Zoom

Throughout the game you will encounter a wide array of creatures which you can capture and use. There are four versions of each type of Minion charted below, one focused around each of the four elements. The wider variety of Minions that you capture, the more options you'll have when merging. See if you can capture all 171!

You can return to status screen with the △ button.

Equipped
ANGRY DOGS
MAD DOGS
Stored
Result
Quit R1 R2 Zoom

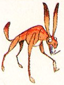
RADGORE



Element: Water
Forest: Spider
Special: Horn atk.

Good speed and attack power, including the spell Vahlis (an ice spell).

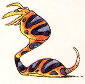
PATDREG



Element: Fire
Forest: Und. Beetle
Special: Horn atk.

Comes with the "Deva-Agni," an elemental fire spell. Decent attack and defense ratings.

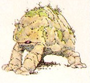
NUSHAB



Element: Fire
Forest: Beetle
Special: Poison atk.

High attack and defense make Nushabs great starting minions. No default spells.

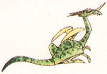
OHMA



Element: Water
Forest: Dragonfly
Special: Ft. Stomp

Ohma's foot stomp attacks all enemies at once (except flying creatures). High in HP and defense.

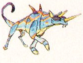
RUGDOGLE



Element: Earth
Forest: Spider
Special: Tail atk.

The Rugdogle is an all-around sort of minion. No spells, but decent mana points.

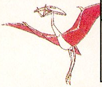
RADDREG



Element: Water
Forest: Moth
Special: Horn atk.

Great defense, but sub-par attack power. No default spells, but high mana points.

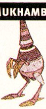
TERBEKER



Element: Earth
Forest: Dragonfly
Special: Sleep atk.

Heavily focused on mana and spell power, the Terbeker falls short in both attack and defense.

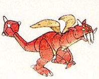
MUKHAMBU



Element: Water
Forest: Beetle
Specials: Horn atk.

Starts with high mana and a relatively good water-based heal spell, Medina.

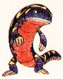
DOGLE



Element: Fire
Forest: Und. Spider
Special: Tail atk.

High attack and defense ratings, but no default spells. Good speed (high '20s).

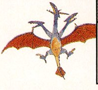
KARN



Element: Fire
Forest: Und. Spider
Special: Destroy Mana

Comes stock with "Deva Agni," and a decent supply of mana points. Good, but hard to find...

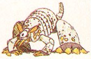
SRIKARTA



Element: Water
Forest: Und. Beetle
Special: Break Legs

Start with the advanced water spell "Vahlia." Extremely focused on magic power.

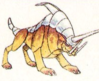
MUGOO



Element: Earth
Forest: Und. Spider
Special: Ft. atk. (All)

Uses "Ad Roqua" which is essentially a Flesh to Stone spell. Low attack but high defense.

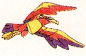
MARRDREG



Element: Air
Forest: Beetle
Special: Horn atk.

Very high HP make the Marrdreg somewhat of a juggernaut early on. Low mana points.

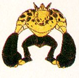
HIRALCO



Element: Air
Forest: Dragonfly
Special: Accuracy

Starting with two spells, Malti and Maltis, the Hiralco is mana-based. High-speed rating!

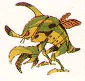
RADDLCHU



Element: Earth
Forest: Moth
Specials: Acc. atk.

Below-average stats across the board. Not one of my favorites to capture or merge...

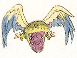
RADOIMEL



Element: Earth
Forest: Spider
Special: Tail atk.

Ultra-high attack, but low speed and mana ratings. No spells, but the tail attack is excellent.

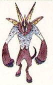
HIRSAG



Element: Earth
Forest: Und. Spider
Special: Absorb Mana

Extra-high mana points, with the spell "Ulvia." Advanced attack earth magic.

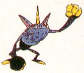
JIRAHL



Element: Water
Forest: Und. Spider
Special: Rend Wings

Looking similar to the Poacher's Goat, without all that extra attack power. Still decent, though.

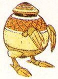
DOGLCHU



Element: Water
Forest: Spider
Special: Critical hit

High attack power, and a really good speed rating. Low mana and no default spells.

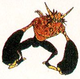
DOGHAMBU



Element: Air
Forest: Spider
Special: Horn atk.

Well-balanced between attack and defense, but no spell power. Looks kinda funny...

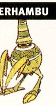
SKAEEB



Element: Wind
Forest: Beetle
Specials: Fang atk.

A good base minion with strong attack power. Low mana points and zero spells.

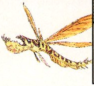
TERHAMBU



Element: Earth
Forest: Und. Spider
Special: Horn Atk.

The charge-up Horn attack is a great damage dealer. High HP, and good mana points as well.

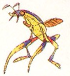
TUREN



Element: Earth
Forest: Und. Spider
Special: Horn atk.

Harnessing the spell "Deva Ulvi," the Turen is great to merge with earth minions.

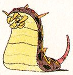
PATMANTY



Element: Fire
Forest: Und. Beetle
Special: Absorb HP

One of the greatest special skills, "Absorb HP." Definitely think about merging him.

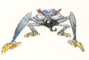
SKWMOAJ



Element: Air
Forest: E. Corridor
Special: Horn atk.

Decent attack power, but really low-speed ratings make it somewhat of a slouch.

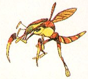
FREY



Element: Fire
Forest: Dragonfly
Special: None

No default spells or special skills, making him somewhat worthless. Looks neat, though...

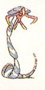
SKAWASP



Element: Fire
Forest: Beetle
Special: Tail atk.

Substandard in most areas, with low attack and defense numbers. Capture for XP.

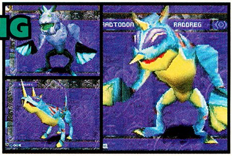
RASHAB



Element: Water
Forest: Spider
Special: Tail atk.

These are the famous minions who give Great Walnuts when defeated.

MINION MERGING



As you acquire Minions and take them to Mahbu, you will be given the option to merge them to form new creatures. There are no perfect equations when it comes to merging, however the following are some of the basic principles.

- Some of the strongest characters can be produced by mixing Minions of the same elemental base (i.e. Fire with Fire). This Minion's elemental spells will become quite strong.

- Don't be afraid to mix elements to create new Minions. While your new hybrid will be capable of casting spells based in both of the two elements merged (i.e., Earth and Water), the power of these attacks will be weaker than those of a purebred Minion. With each of the Minion's various strengths come their weaknesses as well.

- Be sure to preview the results of your merging before committing. Many times gaining new abilities means dropping in HP, Mana or any of the other attributes. This will ensure you don't make a poor decision on the Minions you merge.

WEAPONS CHART

Throughout the game you will come across a variety of weapons to equip to your character. Finding one with a high Speed rating is your best bet, but you may want to hang on to those that provide protection from elemental magics.

Name	Cost	Type	Attack	Magic	Speed	Description/Location
Swd. of Speed	50	*Short sword*	5	0	7	A special weapon, allowing for attack and defense in one turn. A lack of attack power and a low kill rate makes this weapon obsolete early on.
White Horn	100	*Spear*	10	0	4	Light and easy-to-wield spear. Deals relatively high damage. Can be found near the animal skull midway through the Spider Forest.
Autumn Moon	N/A	*Samurai sword*	25	0	20	Offers good attack power and speed. Can be found in the Spider Forest.
Knife	500	*Short sword*	1	0	3	Speedier than the Dagger, but deals almost no damage. This is your starting weapon.
Dagger	800	*Short sword*	2	0	2	Both a low attack and speed rating, just a bit better than the Knife overall.
Aquazor	1,000	*Spear*	3	5	1	Provides divine protection against Water, and Water-based attacks. Can be found inside a hut in the Beetle Forest.
Bronze Sword	1,000	*Long sword*	5	0	0	Fairly heavy sword made of bronze. Offers decent attack power, but lacks speed due to its heavy weight.
Iron Sword	1,500	*Two-handed sword*	7	0	0	Extremely large and hard blade made of iron. Deals more damage than the Bronze Sword, but its heavy weight makes it an impractical weapon.
Iron Axe	found	*Axe*	9	0	-5	Due to its terrible speed and accuracy values, you should only wield this if you have high HP. Find it in the Dragonfly Forest.
Life Stealer	2,000	*Life Stealer*	9	3	3	A very desirable weapon thanks to its attack power and ability to absorb enemy HP.
Little Bird	found	*Short sword*	4	10	15	Provides divine protection of the wind, lightening its user's load. Wind-based attack power, making it an effective weapon against Earth-based enemies.
Whistler	3,500	*Spear*	12	0	7	Sounds like the wind when thrust. Offers relatively high attack power. Found in the Moth Forest.
Nightglow	10,000	*Long sword*	10	5	10	Poisons enemies when it connects. Has a great speed rating too!
Blue Phantom	found	*Two-handed sword*	15	5	5	Many blue sinews run about its blade. Offers very high attack power, but lacks speed due to its weight.
Thunderbolt	10,000	*Spear*	18	7	7	Offers high attack power and can put enemies to sleep. Hidden in the depths of the Dragonfly Forest of the Underworld.
Tsunami	80,000	*Long sword*	20	5	5	Undulating blade with outstanding cutting power. Offers Fire-based attack power, making it an effective weapon against Wind-based enemies.
Spring Blsm.	55,000	*Samurai sword*	25	0	20	Large, curved blade distinctively forged with spectacular blossom patterns. One of the fastest weapons. Also offers high attack power.
Dragoncrest	55,000	*Two-handed sword*	30	5	5	Extremely long blade engraved with a dragon. Offers high attack power but its weight makes it slow and unwieldy.
Cloudcover	55,000	*Two-handed sword*	25	0	7	Large, breathtakingly sharp blade with a design of gathering clouds. Slow due to its large size, but offers high attack power.
Palemoon	55,000	*Axe*	40	10	-2	Leaves a pale trail of light when swung. Lacks speed, but offers Earth-based attack power, making it an effective weapon against Water-based enemies.
Reaper	50,000	*Axe*	45	10	-5	Very low speed value due to its heavy weight, but one fell swoop of this mighty axe soundly crushes the enemy.
Drainer	50,000	*Samurai sword*	25	0	20	Blindingly sharp blade with the amazing ability to absorb the enemy's Mana. Can be bought from Mu in the Eternal Corridor.
Icicle	999,990	*Samurai sword*	25	0	20	Critically wounds the enemy with one swing. The price makes it just a bit ridiculous to buy, though...

ARMOR CHART

Levant begins the game with a modest number of Hit Points, making him relatively vulnerable. While he won't become the powerhouse common to most RPGs, you needn't spend a lot of extra money on armor. Your Minions will do your dirty work for you. Don't neglect your armor, but don't dwell on it either.

Name	Cost	Defense	M/A Power	M/D Power	Speed	Abn. State Resist	Description/Location
Hunter's Vest	50	1	0	0	0	☆☆☆	This is the armor you'll be given at the start of the game.
Leather Vest	100	2	0	1	-1	☆☆☆	Not really worth the upgrade price from your original armor, but can be bought in the Town Shop at Syrus.
Chain Mail Vest	300	3	0	2	-2	☆☆☆	Has a low speed value, but better protection than the standard Hunter's Vest.
Wire Vest	500	4	0	3	-2	☆☆☆	Woven with thin iron wire. Offers protection against magic attacks.
Plate Mail Vest	600	6	0	4	-3	☆☆☆	Made of iron plates. Heavy, but good at warding off attacks.
Reflecting Vest	2,000	10	0	14	-4	☆☆☆	Made of mirror-like reflective material. Offers good resistance against magic attacks.
Silver Vest	1,200	7	5	5	0	☆☆☆☆	Offers substantial resistance against abnormal states.
Divine Vest	2,000	10	0	6	-3	☆☆☆	Decent ratings, but it'll slow you down.
Riketz Garb	2,000	12	10	12	3	☆☆☆☆☆	Offers resistance against attacks that bring you to the brink of death. Get from Garai after Spider Forest.
Nagi Garb	10,000	N/A	0	N/A	2	☆☆	Offers resistance against poison attacks. High defense value.
Bloody Garb	100	35	15	0	-3	☆	High defense and magical attack values, but the wearer is susceptible to abnormal states.
Navy Blue Garb	15,000	18	0	18	3	☆☆☆	Woven from high-grade white cocoon silk.
Forest Garb	20,000	20	0	20	2	☆☆☆	Offers resistance to all abnormal states.
Divine Garb ❶	N/A	25	0	23	5	☆☆☆	Offers high protective power and strong resistance to abnormal states.
Divine Garb ❷	N/A	23	5	25	0	☆☆☆	Offers resistance to all magic and abnormal states.

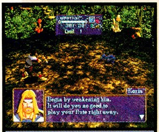
ORNAMENTAL CHART

Ornamental items have a wide array of effects. Some will provide protection against physical attacks, while others will nullify the effects of magic or abnormal status. Protection from abnormal status is probably the most useful.

Name	Cost	Att.	Def.	M. Attack	M. Def.	Speed	Cnfdnce.	E. Resist	Abn. State R.	Description/Location
Leather H.band	100	0	2	0	0	0	0	☆☆	☆☆☆	Get rid of this as fast as possible...
Iron Headband	500	0	3	0	0	-4	0	☆☆	☆☆☆	Weak against elemental attacks. Found in the Beetle Forest.
Silver H.band	1,500	0	2	2	2	-2	0	☆☆	☆☆☆	Band with silver woven in. Offers some resistance to magic.
Blue Bead	400	0	0	0	1	2	0	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆ **(Fire)**	Provides the divine protection of water, resistance against Fire-based attacks.
Green Bead	400	0	0	0	1	2	0	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆ **(Water)**	Provides the divine protection of earth, resistance against Water-based attacks.
Yellow Bead	400	0	0	0	1	2	0	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆ **(Earth)**	Provides the divine protection of wind, resistance against Earth-based attacks.
Red Bead	400	0	0	0	1	2	0	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆ **(Wind)**	Provides the divine protection of fire, resistance against Wind-based attacks.
Sparrow Ruff	500	0	0	0	0	5	10	☆☆☆	☆☆☆	Increases speed and confidence.
Iron Bracelet	500	10	0	0	0	-5	0	☆☆☆	☆☆☆	Offers high attack power, but an extremely low speed rating.
Silver Crown	500	0	0	10	2	0	0	☆☆☆	☆☆☆	Beautifully sculpted from silver. Offers high magic attack power.
Holly Ruff	500	0	2	0	5	0	0	☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆	Offers some resistance to abnormal states. Also protects against evil.
Hawk Ruff	500	0	0	0	0	4	40	☆☆☆	☆☆	Greatly increases confidence when equipped (may increase critical hits).
Anti-V. Choker	700	0	0	3	2	0	0	☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆☆☆ **(Poison)**	Offers extremely high resistance to poison attacks.
Anti-Slp. Choker	700	0	0	3	2	0	0	☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆☆☆ **(Sleep)**	Offers extremely high resistance to sleep attacks.
Anti-Stn. Choker	700	0	0	3	2	0	0	☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆☆☆ **(Stone)**	Offers extremely high resistance to flesh-to-stone attacks.
Super Choker	1,000	0	0	5	5	0	0	☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆☆☆ **(All)**	Offers very high resistance to all abnormal state attacks.
Nagi Belt	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆	Offers resistance to wind and abnormal state attacks. Found in the Dragonfly Forest.

BEETLE FOREST

Syrus Village to the Beetle Forest



Koris

Begin by weakening him.
It will do you no good to
play your flute right away.

The Blue Cocoon Master, will instruct you in how to fight.

SYRUS VILLAGE:

- As Jade Cocoon unfolds, you will run through several somewhat lengthy cinemas. Levant will encounter a Dream Man twice while sleeping and must do battle with him, but there is no way to defeat him. Upon receiving the Flute of Capture, head to the Watch Tower and get the Beetle Key from Lui. I wouldn't worry about upgrading your weapons and armor at this point, but be sure to purchase some Mugwort and a Shab Liquor or two. Now you are ready to head to the Barrier Gate.

BARRIER GATE:

- When you go through the Beetle Gate you will be confronted by Koris the Blue Cocoon Master. He will teach you the basics of combat and capturing Minions. Afterward you must travel through the forest to reach his hut.

THE BEETLE FOREST:

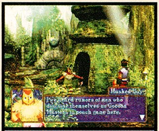
- Traversing the trails of the Beetle Forest shouldn't give you too much difficulty. The most important task while here is to capture as many Minions as you possibly can. By doing this, Levant's Capture Level should increase to around Level 4.

- It will be worth your time to collect the Skeleton Key and claim the items in the treasure chest. Money is never plentiful in the game unless you want to spend a great deal of time capturing Minions.

- Taking the second fork to the right will result in a meeting with the Masked Boy, who looks suspiciously about the size of Lui. You will have to engage him in battle, but he isn't very powerful and should give you little trouble. Check inside his hut to find the Aquazor, a good weapon to find lying around this early in the game.

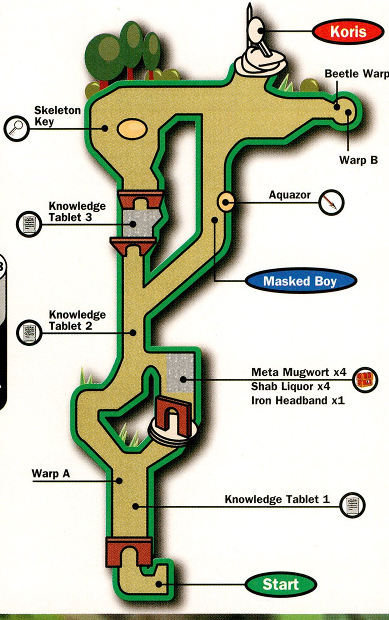
- Just before you reach Koris' hut you will encounter a Mardrreg and Terfrayd, two relatively tough Minions. Do your best to capture them because they are strong Minions when you merge them with another.

- Speak with Koris and get the Dragonfly Key and return to Syrus Village.


Masked Boy

I've heard rumors of men who disguise themselves as Cocoon Masters to poach game here.

The Masked Boy will challenge you to do battle. Be sure to check his hut for the Aquazor.



ESCAPING THE FOREST:
Sometimes things can get a little out of hand while exploring the forest, leaving you weakened and in pretty bad shape. If desperation sets in, use the Hunter's Earring to transport you back to the Barrier Gate.

FOREST WARPS:
Each of the forests contain a pair of warps which will make exploring the area easier and provide you with quick access to the forest exit. Warps can only be used once you have the level Warp Key in your possession.

DRAGONFLY FOREST

Journey Into the Dragonfly Forest

DRAGONFLY FOREST:

- The Dragonfly Forest is divided into three areas, making it a bit more confusing than the Beetle Forest.

- Take some time to build up the levels of your Minions while exploring. Take advantage of the two treasure chests to gain some useful items, such as the Tendai Uyaku (which brings a Minion back to life). Using the various oils will help to toughen up your Minion's different attributes.

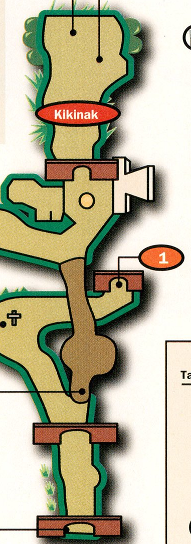
THE POACHER:

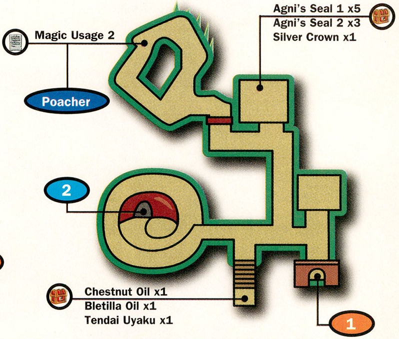
- Levant needs to battle the poacher to get the Larva Key which will open the gate to Kikinak. The poacher will quickly summon Goat, his moderately powerful Minion. The best approach is to hammer him with as many special attacks as you can. Having defeated Goat, you will need to finish off the poacher. The reward you receive for the hard-fought battle is the Larva Key, an Iron Axe and a Great Walnut (you'll need these).

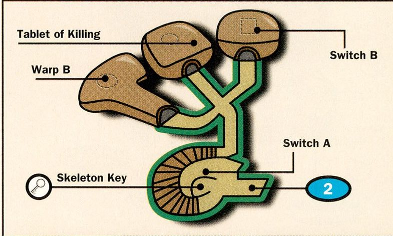
The poacher will attack you and summon his Minion, Goat. Once you've defeated him, finish off the poacher.

BATTLING KIKINAK

The Bird Man isn't a particularly tough boss to defeat if your Minions are around level seven or eight, but if not, you've got your work cut out for you. Regardless of your level, hit Kikinak hard with Special Attacks and bring Levant in to replenish lost health. Defeat Kikinak to gain the Spider Key, Calabas Powder and an Ocarina. Return to the spot were you fought Kikinak and you can spar with him to gain Great Walnuts and learn about his past.

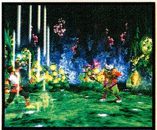

Warp A
Dragonfly Warp
Kikinak
Magic Usage 1
1
Skeleton Key
Skeleton Key
Start


Agni's Seal 1 x5
Agni's Seal 2 x3
Silver Crown x1
Magic Usage 2
Poacher
2
Chestnut Oil x1
Bletilla Oil x1
Tendai Uyaku x1
1


Tablet of Killing
Switch B
Warp B
Switch A
Skeleton Key
2

SPIDER FOREST

Spider Forest to the Syrus Village



The poacher is back, this time with the more powerful Lagoat fighting for him. A Minion that is Fire-based will be your best bet in defeating Lagoat and the poacher.

SPIDER FOREST:

- You will need to travel through the Spider Forest twice before moving on. The first time your ultimate goal is to reach Totoyamu. The remainder of these creatures are not essential to completing this forest, but they will give you information. Give Yami a Kickleberry and Yamu the Minion Fang to find out what they know. Once you've reached Totoyamu, give him the Tears of Reese and you'll be returned to Syrus Village.

SYRUS VILLAGE:

- You will receive the Capture Amulet from Garai and the Champion's Belt from the chieftain. Return to Spider Forest once you have them.

SPIDER FOREST:

- Bring the Champion's Belt to Totyamu and he will return the Tears of Reese, also opening the path to the Calabas Tree. Head to the Calabas Tree, making sure to collect treasure chests and the White Horn before reaching the tree.

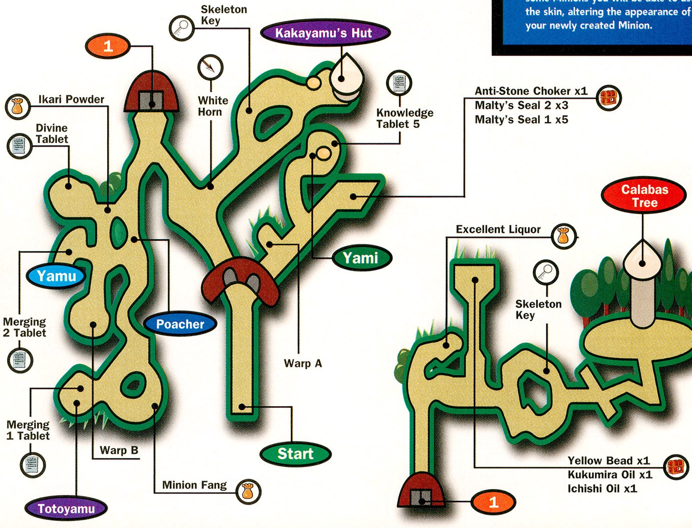
172/389
Level 15
338/338
Level 15
Stone
45/45

STONE AND POISON:

Certain Minions have the ability to cast spells which will turn you to stone or infect you with poison. Once effected, the percentage of hitting your opponent goes down. Of course, this is the same if you turn your adversary to stone or poison him. The only difference is that if either of the aforementioned afflictions kill the Minion, you won't get any experience points.

RARE MINION SKINS:

As you travel through the Eternal Corridor you will battle with many different types of creatures. On occasion, you will receive a Minion skin when you have defeated your adversary. The next time you merge some Minions you will be able to use the skin, altering the appearance of your newly created Minion.


Skeleton Key
Kakayamu's Hut
1
White Horn
Knowledge Tablet 5
Anti-Stone Choker x1
Malty's Seal 2 x3
Malty's Seal 1 x5
Ikari Powder
Divine Tablet
Calabas Tree
Excellent Liquor
Yami
Yamu
Skeleton Key
Merging 2 Tablet
Poacher
Warp A
Merging 1 Tablet
Warp B
Start
Yellow Bead x1
Kukumira Oil x1
Ichishi Oil x1
Minion Fang
Totoyamu
1

MOTH FOREST

Moth Forest to the Nagi Village

MOTH FOREST:

- When you've returned to Syrus Village, a series of cinemas will occur. Go to Garai's house to find the Moth Key, which will lead to obtaining Mahbu's Cocoon and the Riketz Garb.

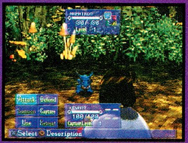
Mahbu will open the final gate to enter the Nagi Village.

POACHER:

- Yep. You'll encounter the poacher for a third and final time. He will summon Gigoat, an Earth-based Minion, who really didn't give my Level 11 Minion much of a fight. Defeat the poacher and you will receive a Great Walnut and, more importantly, the Pupa Key. The Pupa Key will open the way to the Nagi Village.

The Nagi Village:

- After receiving a lengthy explanation of what has happened and what you need to do, Levant will get the Jewel of Water from Ni, the Nagi chieftain. Two Nagi servants are made available to replace Mahbu for purifying Minions, as well as buying and selling items and weapons. Now it's off to the Netherworld.

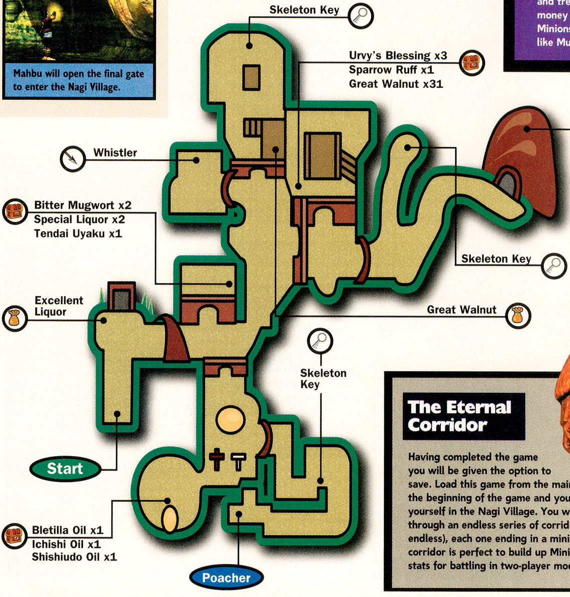

ARPATRON
30/ 30
Level 1
Attack
Defend
Summon
Capture
Use
Retreat
LEVANT
100/100
Capture Level
Select
Description

THE PERFECT MINION?

The best overall Minion you can acquire and use as a base is found when you first meet Koris. When you practice capturing you will get Arpatron, a Water-based Minion that is very well rounded.

WEAPONS AND ARMOR:

Don't waste a lot of time and money trying to upgrade your weapons and armor. At the start of the game this is helpful, but later on you will be able to obtain great weapons/armor from battling creatures, exploring and treasure chests. Focus the money you gain from capturing Minions on stockpiling healing items like Mugworts and Liquors.


Skeleton Key
Urvy's Blessing x3
Sparrow Ruff x1
Great Walnut x31
Nagi Village
Whistler
Bitter Mugwort x2
Special Liquor x2
Tendai Uyaku x1
Skeleton Key
Excellent Liquor
Great Walnut
Skeleton Key
Start
Bletilla Oil x1
Ichishi Oil x1
Shishiudo Oil x1
Poacher

The Eternal Corridor

Having completed the game you will be given the option to save. Load this game from the main menu at the beginning of the game and you will find yourself in the Nagi Village. You will go through an endless series of corridors (and it *is* endless), each one ending in a mini-boss. The corridor is perfect to build up Minion stats for battling in two-player mode.

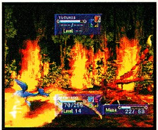
Netherworld Beetle Forest to the Choosen One

BEETLE FOREST

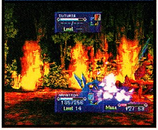
Search for The Jewel of Fire

BEETLE FOREST:
• Use the preceding maps to navigate through all of the Netherworld forests. Your goal in the Beetle Forest is to reach Koris' hut. The only thing that has changed is the location of the Skeleton Key, which can now be found in the Masked Boy's hut. The chest contains Vary's Blessing (x3), Malty's Blessings (x3) and a Hawk Ruff.

THE FIRE BOSS (KORIS):
• There's no doubt that a Water-based Minion would be well suited for this battle. He will summon Tuturis and he can be quite a handful. The most dangerous of his attacks is the fire he unleashes upon the ground. This will do a ton of damage to any Minion not Water-based. Interspersed between this attack, Tuturis will use his poisonous tail or drain some mana. I recommend stocking up on Valerian Powder and healing liquors. For your trouble you will receive the Jewel of Fire.



Use a Water-based Minion to douse the flames of Tuturis, the Minion of the Fire Boss, and you'll receive the Jewel of Fire.

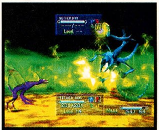


DRAGONFLY FOREST

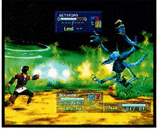
Search for The Jewel of Wind

DRAGONFLY FOREST:
• Head for the clearing where you encountered Kikinak to face the Wind Boss. There is only one Skeleton Key to be found in the Dragonfly Forest and it's located where you found the Tablet of Killing. The treasure is found just to the left of the gate leading to Kikinak and contains Bletilla Oil, Chestnut Oil and Sleep Spores (x3). Search the area where you fought the poacher to find a Thunderbolt Spear.

THE WIND BOSS (KIKINAK):
• The Wind Boss will summon Seterian to battle for him. Both of his main attacks are very powerful. The cyclone he sends at you will do over 100 points of damage and so will his grabbing attack. Unfortunately, he is also capable of putting your Minions to sleep and healing himself. Diligently rotating your Minions and using Levant to heal them will be your salvation. This battle will take some patience.



The key to defeating Seterian is the constant switching of your Minions, coupled by hit point maintenance from your main character.

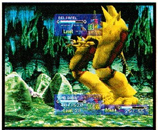


SPIDER FOREST

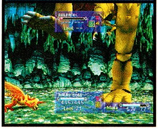
Search for The Jewel of Earth

SPIDER FOREST:
• You will encounter the Earth Boss three seperate times. Return to the locations where you encountered Yamu, Kakayamu and Yami and you will battle him. There is a Skeleton Key in the same spot where you found the Divine Tablet. The treasure chest is located where you found the Excellent Liquor the first time through and contains Bitter Mugwort (x3), Special Liquor (x3) and Great Walnuts (x2).

THE EARTH BOSS (MAHBU):
• The true Earth Boss is at the Calabas Tree. The Delfanel is not as bad as he looks, if you have some Minions with resistance to Stone. Equip your main character with the Anti-Stone Choker and he will be in good shape for healing weakened Minions. When Mahbu is not attempting this attack, he will be charging for a foot stomp, which does pretty heavy damage. Upon his defeat you will receive the Jewel of Earth.



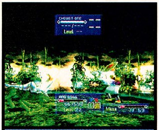
Delfanel will try to turn all of your Minions to Stone. Some Minions have a higher resistance than others, so be sure to have some Ikari Powder.



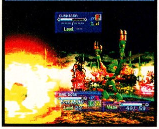
THE CHOOSEN ONE

The Final Confrontation

THE CHOSEN ONE:
• After defeating the Earth Boss, the Choosen One will appear to do battle with you. Healing your characters after your tussel with Delfanel is essential if you want a fighting chance. The Choosen One will summon Cushidra, a Minion that will change its elemental base after every attack round. Fortunately there is a method to his madness. The pattern he changes elements in starts with Earth, followed by Air, Fire and Water. Cushidra will attack first and then change elements. Bring Levant in when you know his next move will be to change elements, giving him the oppportunity to heal your Minions and switch in your desired fighter. Constantly rotating in Minions and replenishing their hit points is the key to defeating Cushidra. The Choosen One himself is not very tough, but can do some heavy damage. Finish him off and watch the final cinema roll.



The Choosen One will summon Cushidra, a Minion who will change elements after every attack. Use the opptunity to heal your wounded Minions.



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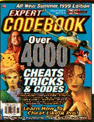
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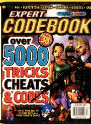
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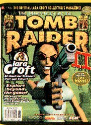
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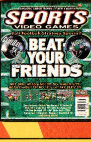
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Archive Tricks

3Xtreme

Hidden Characters and Tracks

At the Main Menu, highlight "Memory Card" and press Left or Right, then choose the "Codes" selection. Then, enter any of the codes as shown for various results:

Enter "**VOUYEUR**" at the Codes Screen to unlock all the Exhibition tracks.
Enter ""**TRIXXY**" at the Codes Screen to unlock all the Freestyle tracks.
Enter "**ASTROMEN**" at the Codes Screen to unlock all the alien characters.
Enter "**BINK**" at the Codes Screen to unlock Bink the alien skateboarder.
Enter "**REDCAR**" at the Codes Screen to unlock Red the car.
Enter "**NYUB**" at the Codes Screen to unlock Nyub the alien rollerblader.
Enter "**WHITECAR**" at the Codes Screen to unlock White the car.
Enter "**GEEP**" at the Codes Screen to unlock Geep the alien biker.
Enter "**BLUECAR**" at the Codes Screen to unlock Blue the car.

Rushdown

All Tracks

Here's a code to unlock all of the tracks. On the Main Menu Screen press Up, Up, Down, Down, Left, Right, Left, Right, Triangle, Circle, Triangle, Circle. This will unlock all the tracks in the Arcade mode.

Fisherman's Bait

Total Count List

On the Title Screen, press Up, Up, Down, Down, L1, R1, L1, R1, X, Circle. Then press the Start button. Go to Options. On the Options Screen, press Select. If you have done the code correctly, you will see a "Total Count Screen." This will display the total number of games played, number of line breaks, lost fish, and the totals for all types of fish caught.

Invasion From Beyond

Various Cheats

Level Select:
At the Press Start Screen, enter L1, R1, L2, R2, Triangle, X, Circle, Square (2x), Circle, X, Triangle. Go to the Main Menu to select any level in the game.

All Ships, Weapons and Upgrades:
At the Press Start Screen, enter L1, R1, L2, R2, Up, Down, Right, Left (2x), Right, Down, Up for all ships, weapons and upgrades.

MLB 2000

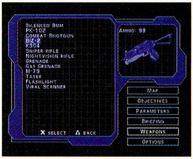
Heavy Hitter

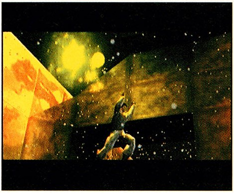
Go to the Create Player mode and make the player's name Scott Murray. This player will hit a 606-foot home run every time.

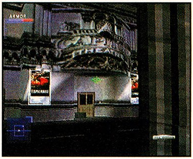
Syphon Filter

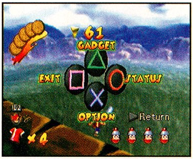
CINEMA CODE

When you begin the first level, go into the bar. When you get to the guy shooting at you from behind some crates, shoot him, then go into that room and out the window. On the right is the fence and the elevator, on the left is an alley. Go down the alley and you should be in a street with flaming squadcars at the end. On the left side are three doors. Use the sniping mode to look up, and it should say THEATER above the right door. Go up to the door and pause the game. Keep MAP highlighted, then press and hold in this order: Right+L2+R1+X. Gabe should say "Got it" after you enter the code. When you press Start again, you should be in the theater. Enter either curtain and all the movies should appear. Press X to skip any of the movies and press Start to go back to the theater.









Ape Escape

SAVE YOUR LIFE

After you fall off a cliff, press the Start button and then press Square to exit. Now you will go to the Time Station and begin at the level you left off with the same amount of lives you had before you fell off the cliff. Make sure you press the Start button before you fall too far!

Do you have a trick that you, and only you, know? Don't hold back—write us at:

Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine
P.O. Box 3338
Oak Brook, IL 60522-3338

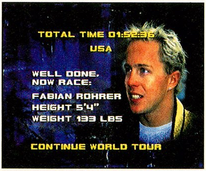
Sorry, we cannot respond to individual letters asking for codes or tricks.

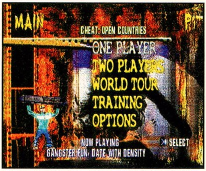
Big Air

Courses, Special Races and Boards

All Courses

At the Main Menu Screen, quickly press Right, Left, Right, Left, Circle, Square, Circle, Square, then select any Freeride Mode.





Race against Shawn Palmer

At the Main Menu, quickly press Square(8). Then, finish the first track in World Tour Mode in first place to race against him in the next race.

Race against Mike Beallo

At the Main Menu, quickly press Square(6), Circle(2). Then, finish the first track in World Tour Mode in first place to race against him in the next race.

Race against Nicola Thost

At the Main Menu, quickly press Square (7), Circle. Then, finish the first track in World Tour Mode in first place to race against him in the next race.

Race against Ian Spiro

At the Main Menu, quickly press Square(6), Circle, Square. Then, finish the first track in World Tour Mode in first place to race against him in the next race.

Race against Ross Powers

At the Main Menu, quickly press Square(5), Circle, Square(2). Then, finish the first track in World Tour Mode in first place to race against him in the next race.

Race against Fabien Rohrer

At the Main Menu, quickly press Square(5), Circle, Square, Circle. Then, finish the first track in World Tour Mode in first place to race against him in the next race.

Big Air board

At the Main Menu, quickly press Right, Left, Right, Left, Square(3), Circle. Then at the Board Selection Screen, choose the Pitbull.

TD5 board

At the Main Menu, quickly press Right, Left, Right, Left, Square(2), Circle, Square. Then at the Board Selection Screen, choose the Pitbull.

Steve's board

At the Main Menu, quickly press Right, Left, Right, Left, Square(2), Circle(2). Then at the Board Selection Screen, choose the Pitbull.

Jimmy's board

At the Main Menu, quickly press Right, Left, Right, Left, Square, Circle(3). Then at the Board Selection Screen, choose the Pitbull.

John's board

At the Main Menu, quickly press Right, Left, Right, Left, Circle, Square(3). Then at the Board Selection Screen, choose the Pitbull.

Daniel's board

At the Main Menu, quickly press Right, Left, Right, Left, Circle, Square(2), Circle. Then at the Board Selection Screen, choose the Pitbull.

Fire board

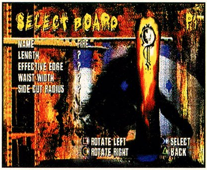
At the Main Menu, quickly press Right, Left, Right, Left, Square, Circle, Square(2). Then at the Board Selection Screen, choose the Pitbull.

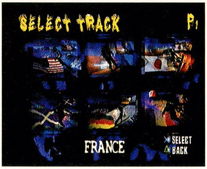
Angel board

At the Main Menu, quickly press Right, Left, Right, Left, Square, Circle, Square, Circle. Then at the Board Selection Screen, choose the Pitbull.

Accolade board

At the Main Menu, quickly press Right, Left, Right, Left, Square, Circle(2), Square. Then at the Board Selection Screen, choose the Pitbull.





Moto Racer

Cycle Codes

Faster Bikes:
Press Up(3), Right, Left, Triangle, X at the Main Menu.

Higher Jumps:
Press Left(2), Up(2), Right(2), Down(2), Square, Triangle, X at the Main Menu.

Other Racers Limited to 50 km/h:
Press Circle, Square, Right, Left, L1, R1, X at the Main Menu.

Need For Speed: High Stakes

Hidden Vehicles

Police Helicopter:
Enter the Game Option Screen and select the User Name option. Then enter WHIRLY as your player name. The helicopter is available only in Test Drive Mode.

Phantom car:
Enter the Game Option Screen and select the User Name option. Then enter FLASH as your player name for the Phantom car.

Titan car:
Enter the Game Option Screen and select the User Name option. Then enter HOTROD as your player name for the Titan car.

Syphon Filter

Level Select:

Pause the game, then go into the Options Menu. Highlight the Select Mission option, then press and hold Left+L1+R1+Select+Square+X.

All Weapons and Unlimited Ammunition:

Pause gameplay and highlight the Weapons option. Hold Right+L2+R2+Circle+Square+X (in order). Note: Only the weapons normally available during the current level will become selectable.

Rally Cross 2

Various Cheats

Start a new season and enter the following as your name to unlock the various cheats as shown:

MOOBMOOB – All cars
PREVET – Veteran level tracks and cars
PREPRO – Pro level tracks and cars
PREALL – All tracks and cars. This will not automatically unlock the Vapor or Radia car. This cheat also allows you to start with a large lead at the last race of the pro season.
SISAO – Oasis track
ELGNUJ – Jungle track
FOSTER – Little Woods track
NIVEK – Frozen Trail track
MIT – Dusty Road track
KCIN – Rock Creek track
CIRE – Dry Humps track
BSIRHC – Hillside track
AIRFILLED – Low gravity
LEADSHOT – Original Rally Cross game physics
MOONEY – Restore Rally Cross 2 game physics
INCORPOREAL – Disable collision detection

Archive Tricks

Army Men 3-D

Invincibility and All Weapons

After you have started the mission, press the Start button to bring up the Pause Screen. These codes must be input within about two seconds to work:

Make Sarge Invincible:
Square, Circle, L1, L1+L2 (simultaneously)

All the Weapons:
Square, Circle, R1, L1, R1+R2 (simultaneously)

T'ai Fu: Wrath of the Tiger

Various Cheats

Debug Mode

Start a game and finish any level to access the Map Screen. While there, press Select+L1+L2+R1+R2 to open the Debug mode. Now you can choose any starting level in the game!

Many Cheats

The following cheats are to be entered quickly at any time during gameplay (don't pause the game):

Enable Cheats – This code enables all of the following gameplay cheats: R2, Triangle, R2, Triangle, Circle, X, Square.

Full Chi Cheat – This code fills your chi bar: R2, Triangle, R2, Left, Right, Square.

Invulnerable Cheat – This code will make the player invincible to enemies: R2, Triangle, R2, Left, Right, R2.

Double Size Enemies Cheat – This code will make all enemies appear twice their normal size: R2, Triangle, R2, Left, Right, Up.

Half Size Enemies Cheat – This code will make all enemies appear half their normal size: R2, Triangle, R2, Left, Right, Down.

Nine Lives Cheat – No matter how many times you are killed, you will always have nine lives: R2, Triangle, R2, Left, Right, X.

All Styles Cheat – This code will give you all fighting styles: R2, Triangle, R2, Left, Right, Triangle.

Full Health Cheat – This code will give you full health at any time in the game: R2, Triangle, R2, Left, Right, Circle.

WCW/nWo Thunder

Many Cool Codes

All Wrestlers:
At the Title Screen, press R1(4), L1(4), R2(4), L2(4), Select to unlock all 128 wrestlers.

Big Heads:
At the Title Screen, press R1(7), R2, Select.

Driver

Many Cheats

Go to the Main Menu /Title Screen and enter the tricks as shown. To activate the cheats, move right until you highlight the police car and then access the Cheats Menu.

SHOW CREDITS
At the Main Menu rapidly press L1, L2, R1, R2, L1, R1, R2, L2, R1, R2, L1, L2, R1. The Credits option will now be unlocked in the Cheats Screen.

INVINCIBILITY
Press L2, L2, R2, R2, L2, R2, L2, L1, R2, R1, L2, L1, L1. The Invincibility option will now be unlocked in the Cheats Screen.

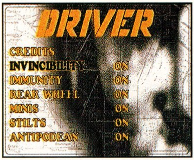
NO POLICE CHASES
At the Main Menu rapidly press L1, L2, R1, R1, R1, R1, L2, L2, R1, R1, L1, L1, R2. The Immunity option will now be unlocked in the Cheats Screen.

STEER WITH REAR WHEELS
At the Main Menu rapidly press R1, R1, R1, R2, L2, R1, R2, L2, L1, R2, R1, L2, L1. The Rear Wheel option will now be unlocked in the Cheats Screen.

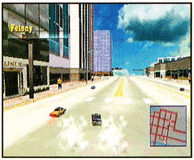
SMALL CARS
At the Main Menu rapidly press R1, R2, R1, R2, L1, L2, R1, R2, L1, R1, L2, L2, L2. The Minis option will now be unlocked in the Cheats Screen.

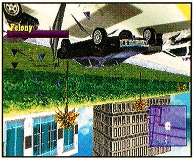
LONG SUSPENSION
At the Main Menu rapidly press R2, L2, R1, R2, L2, L1, R2, R2, L2, L2, L1, R2, R1. The Stilts option will now be unlocked in the Cheats Screen.

FLIP SCREEN UPSIDE DOWN
At the Main Menu rapidly press R2, R2, R1, L2, L1, R2, L2, L1, R2, R2, L2, R2, L1. The Antipodean option will now be unlocked in the Cheats Screen.



CREDITS
INVINCIBILITY ON
IMMUNITY ON
REAR WHEEL ON
MINIS ON
STILTS ON
ANTIPODEAN ON

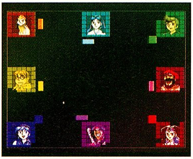


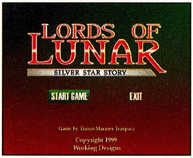


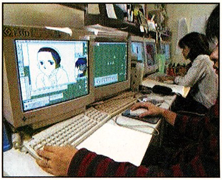
Lunar: Silver Star Story Complete

LORDS OF LUNAR MINI-GAME

Insert the "Making Of Lunar" disc. Then when the video sequence of the making of the game begins, press Up, Down, Left, Right, Triangle, Start. You will then be taken to a new Title Screen called, Lords Of Lunar! You and one other player can battle against six computer players for a total of eight players. You can choose your character for the castle you defend, set up your options and more!







R-Type Delta

Multiple Codes

CONTINUE 3
YES ✕ NO △
CREDIT
FULL BEAM

LEVEL SELECT
Use the bombs more than 10,000 times.

9 CREDITS
Gain over three hours of gameplay.

FREE PLAY MODE
Gain over six hours of gameplay.

POWER ARMOR
Beat the game in "Human" or higher difficulty setting, or by playing the game over 100 times.

GRADD
MILENA
WINNER GRADD

Destrega

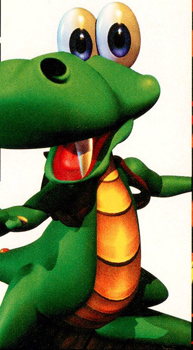
ALTERNATE COSTUME
From the Main Menu, select One Player Battle Mode. Defeat this mode with any character on any difficulty setting. When starting the next game, highlight the same character and hit R2. You will now see the character in his/her alternate costume.

Croc 2

START GAME WITH 9 HEARTPOTS
On Title Screen, hold down R1 and then press Left, Left, Down, Circle, Square Square. You'll hear a confirmation sound.

MAX OUT YOUR CRYSTALS
On Title Screen, hold down L1 and then press Square, Square, Circle, Down, Left, Right, Left, Right. Once you activate the code, begin your game and hold R2 and press Square to add 100 crystals. You can add as many as you like for a maximum of 9999!

CROC 2
New Game
Load Game
Select



Big Head, Hands, Feet and Weapons:
At the Title Screen, press R2(7), R1, Select.

Might Meter:
At the Title Screen, press L2(4), R2(4), L1(4), R1(4), Select. The offensive and defensive attributes of each wrestler may now be adjusted.

View FMV Sequences:
At the Options Menu, press R1(4), L1(4), Select. Press Left+X to advance through the sequences, Right+X to move back, or Start(2) to exit.

Cage Ring in Any Type of Match:
Enter the Options Menu, highlight the "Random" ring selection, then press R1, R2, R1, R2, Select. If you entered the code correctly, the word "Cage" will be spoken. Since The Cage ring is not enabled with the "Ring select" code, this is the only way to obtain it.

Ring Select:
At the Options Menu, press R1, R2, R1, R2, Select. Now every time Select is pressed, the current ring will advance by one. To move in reverse, press L1, L2, L1, L2 followed by Select.

Dancing Wrestlers:
Enable the "Ring Select" code, then choose the USO ring to have dancing wrestlers. Press L1 to pan to the other side of the ring (except for Battle Royal) or L2 for a small dance move.

PARASYTE
SAILOR MOON
ICE BLADE
MAGIC KNIGHT RAYEARTH
HARLEM BEAT
MIXX
MIXX ZINE

Are you a true GAMER? Then you're a MIXXER!

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by Gary Steinman
gary_steinman@zd.com

⚙⚙⚙⚙⚙ 5G No question, this should be in your home
⚙⚙⚙⚙ 4G Recommended, very cool
⚙⚙⚙ 3G Pretty good, check it out
⚙⚙ 2G Below average
⚙ 1G Very lame

Motion Sickness

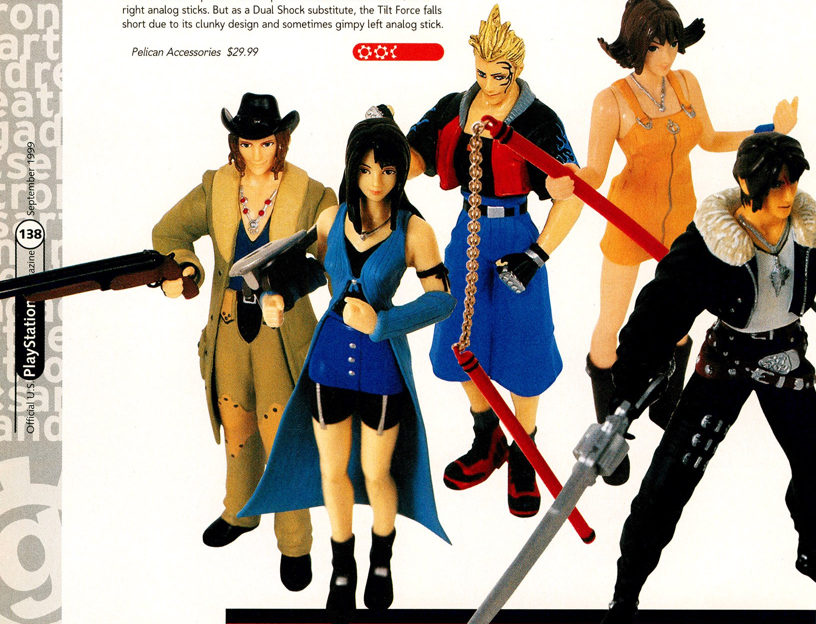
Pelican's **Tilt Force** motion-sensing controller seems like a good idea, but ends up being somewhat pointless. While the motion-sensing technology is very well realized, it was too difficult to use with any game we tested it on. (We found ourselves swinging around wildly trying to get the right range of movement.) In the controller's defense, it's extremely customizable, even allowing you to set the "at-rest" position or swap the control between the left and right analog sticks. But as a Dual Shock substitute, the Tilt Force falls short due to its clunky design and sometimes gimpy left analog stick.

Pelican Accessories $29.99 ⚙⚙◐

Fantasy Fulfilled

Like any good fanboy, this editor remembers running to his favorite import store to buy the Japanese **Final Fantasy VII** figures at an absurd markup—well before Bandai decided to release them here at reasonable prices. But this time, Bandai will have a full lineup of Final Fantasy VIII figures available in time for the game's release. And while the last batch had a certain charm that these lack, the new figures are still quite nice and detailed—and certainly are a must-have for any Final Fantasy freak.

Bandai $9.99 ⚙⚙⚙⚙



Plug 'n' Play

Tired of tangled wires, annoying extension cords and cordless controllers that don't always work? Well, Nyko has an innovative solution with its **RF Max 900** cordless RF switch. Plug one end into your TV and the other into your PlayStation, and you can place your console up to 30 feet away. The picture comes in quite clearly with just a few jiggles of the antennae, and there's no noticeable lag time when you input your commands. Plus it's compatible with the N64 and Dreamcast (but you don't mess with those *other* consoles now, do you?).

Nyko *$34.99*

Slick Pics

A picture may be worth a thousand words, but Sony's betting digital pics will be worth a thousand smackers to some wealthy photophiles. That's where the **Digital Photo Frame** comes in. Using Sony's new 32MB Memory Stick (which, by the way, is not the PlayStation 2's memory card—but it will be compatible with the system), the Photo Frame can play MPEG movies or display JPEG shots in a variety of resolutions and settings. You can even set up a cyber slide show of your favorite video game babes.

Sony Electronics $999

In the Bag

It's hard to look very cool carrying your PlayStation around with you, but that'll change if you pick up this **PlayStation Carrying Case**. Heck, you'll even look pretty suave lugging around your books or work papers in this thing. You can order one of these from the PlayStation Threadz & Accessories catalogue online at **STORE.PLAYSTATION.COM**, where you'll also find a host of other PlayStation products ranging from T-shirts to breakaway sweatpants (for the stripper in you) to jackets and cargo shorts.

Sony CEA (Carrying Case) $19.95

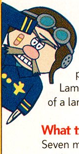
Um Jammer Lammy

Players	1-2	**Developer**	Mana On-Sha
Availability	August	**Publisher**	Sony CEA
Analog Compatible	No	**Genre**	Misc.

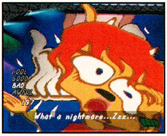
✕ ○ □ △ L1 R1 **During gameplay, a rhythm bar will appear at the top of the screen with button icons that correspond to the buttons on the PlayStation controller. Each level has a singer that Lammy has to beat. A picture of the singer's head will move across the rhythm bar when it is his or her turn. As Lammy, you will play the guitar by pushing the corresponding buttons when Lammy's head moves across the rhythm bar.**

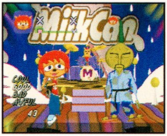
L2 **Pitch Bend Down**

R2 **Pitch Bend Up**



What is it?
The sequel to cult-favorite rhythm action game PaRappa the Rapper. Only instead of everyone's favorite rapping canine, Um Jammer Lammy stars Lammy, a grunge-rocking, guitar freak, grrl of a lamb. Word.

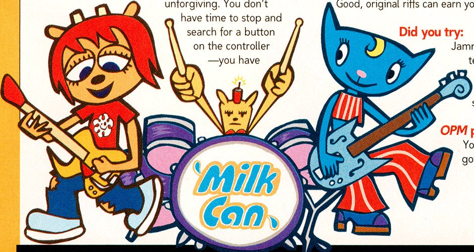




What to expect in the full game:
Seven musical stages; psychedelic rendered stage introductions; two-player co-operative and competitive modes; five guitar effects; special PaRappa "remix" mode.

Our advice:
If you don't know the PlayStation controller by heart, start memorizing button positions now. While PaRappa acolytes will slip straight into the groove, newbies may find the steep learning curve unforgiving. You don't have time to stop and search for a button on the controller—you have to just press it reflexively.

The gameplay itself is similar to the Simon. First, the stage's teacher sings a phrase, represented by a button combination at the top of the screen. Next, Lammy replicates the teacher's performance by pushing the same buttons in the same rhythm. It sounds simple enough—but the rhythms and button combos soon get fiendishly difficult. In the full version of the game, Lammy eventually earns "effects," such as distortion, flanger, and wah wah pedals, that can be applied to her guitar. Hard rockers can pitch bend notes with the L2 and R2 buttons. Want to jam like Jimmy Page? Practice your solos with Lammy. Good, original riffs can earn you the coveted Cool rating.



Did you try:
Jammin' cool? Following the teacher is fun, but strumming to your own beat is even better. See the sidebar for more details.

***OPM* psychic sez:**
You gotta do what? You gotta believe!

U Jammin' Cool!
Here's the fever codes for the demo level...

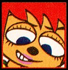
There are six codes per level, one for each button...the order is △, ○, ✕, □, L1, R1

Level 1

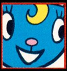
△ △ △ R1
○ ○ R1 ○ ○
✕ □ △ ○ ✕ □
□ □ ○ □ □
L1 R1 R1 □
R1 R1 R1 R1

The twisted progeny of Rodney Greenblat's mind

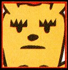
When PaRappa producer Masaya Matsuura needed someone to bring PaRappa's surrealistic, paper-thin world to life, he turned to character designer Rodney Greenblat. Both original characters and characters from Greenblat's other creations populate the world of PaRappa and Lammy. Here are some of the folks found in the demo:


LAMMY

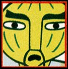
A rocking guitarist with a self-confidence problem, she overslept and has to hurry to Milkcan's big concert. She can jam her way out of any situation, even without a guitar—she just visualizes the instrument. "Dojo! Casino! It's all in the mind!"


KATY KAT

Fashion-conscious and proud of it, Katy Kat loves shopping, jamming on the bass and dancing all night in a fly discotheque. A non-stop dreamer, she's always hatching some crazy scheme for herself and her friends.


MA-SAN

Milkcan's drummer is a woman of few words, but she's got a dynamite personality. What she lacks in loquaciousness and intelligibility she makes up for in SHEER VOLUME. What a firecracker!


CHOP CHOP MASTER ONION

The story of this sensei will bring a tear to your eye. Once upon a time, he ran a profitable and respected karate dojo. It even had a casino! But his dojo closed, and he's now reduced to the opening act for a bunch of teenage girls. Sad, really.

Sled Storm

Players	1-4	**Developer**	EA Canada
Availability	August	**Publisher**	EA
Analog Compatible	Yes	**Genre**	Racing

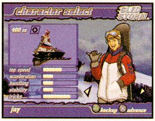
✕	**Accelerate**
○	**Change Rider Stance (Sit, Kneel, Stand)**
□	**Brake/Reverse**
△	**Change Camera**
L1	**Hard turn**
L2 & directional	**Trick "a"**
R1	**Hard turn**
R2 & directional	**Trick "b"**

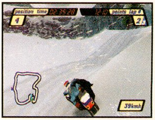
Snowmocreep 2000

EA is licensing a bevy of killer musicians for Sled Storm's soundtrack. At the forefront is the chillin' undead rocker Rob Zombie; joining him are Uberzone, Econoline Crush, Dom & Roland, E-Z Rollers and Jeff Dyck.

What is it?

Videogaming's first "extreme" snowmobiling simulator.

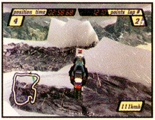




What to expect in the final version:

Fourteen levels with tons of shortcuts; two- and four-player simultaneous racing; six unique characters with distinct tricks; realistic physics model and terrain; instant replay; killer soundtrack.

Our advice:



Tracey controls like a dream, but is tragically missing the part of her brain that performs tricks. Jay is slightly less stable on the snow, but can perform tricks out his proverbial wazoo. So choose your character and get racing! The ice and snow have a lower coefficient of friction than the concrete tracks found in other racing games, so you may find yourself slip-sliding around until you get a grip on how the snowmobile handles. Watch the other racers closely to learn the shortcuts, and then be sure to take them! Shortcuts are extremely important to maintaining your lead. During large jumps, adjust the pitch of your snowmobile to avoid a speed loss on landing.

The "Open Mountain" tracks have huge pits, slippery ice and forestfuls of trees, while the "SnoCross" tracks have sharp turns and huge aerial ramps. The final game includes eight "Open Mountain" and six "SnoCross" levels; the demo includes one course of each type.

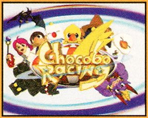
OPM psychic sez:

The "five-point physics" model is cool, and the game controls smoothly. If it lives up to the developer's promises, it could be one of the better "extreme" games to grace the PlayStation.

Chocobo Racing

Players	1-2	**Developer**	SquareEA
Availability	August	**Publisher**	Squaresoft
Analog Compatible	Yes	**Genre**	Racing

✕	**Brake**
○	**Cancel (command screens)**
□	**Accelerate**
△	**Reverse**
L1	**Use Special Ability**
L2	**Not used**
R1	**Use Magic Stone**
R2	**Not used**

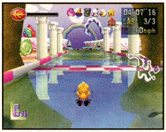


Kweh kweh wark!

Final Fantasy fans will go nuts at the game's racers. Chocobo, Moogle, Fat Chocobo, Golem, Behemoth, White Mage, Black Mage and Goblin are all immediately accessible; while secret characters include Bahamut, Squall, Cid, Cloud Strife, the original Chocobo and more.

What is it?

"Everybody else is doing it, so why aren't we?" said a Square executive before green-lighting this kart racer. Final Fantasy's hyper-cute Chocobo, races his friends (and foes) around the world.

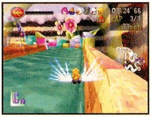


What to expect in the final:

Eight regular racers and 10 secret racers; Story, Time Trial, Grand Prix, Vs and Relay modes; character creation mode; lots of magic spells and 10 Final Fantasy-themed courses.

Our advice:

Learn the unique magic system before you start the race. Driving over a Fire symbol gives you the Fire spell; you can cast Fire immediately, or you can drive over another Fire symbol and gain the more powerful Fire 2. Each spell can be upgraded twice to its third level of power. The most useful attack spells are Fire 2 and 3 (heat seeking blasts), Ice 3 (ice blast to all opponents), Thunder 3 (six lightning bolts strike opponents), and Ultima (attack to all opponents). Building up your magic power may take a while, but the delayed gratification is well worth it. Defensively, Reflect can't be beat. Used automatically when you're attacked, it sends the spell blasting back at the caster. Magic usage is almost more important than racing skill. You're going to get hit by opponents' attacks no matter what, so roll with the punches and carry on.



Brake and skid around turns. On sharper turns, tap the brake button two or three times. Ideally, you should never have to let up off the gas. Now get racing!

Did you try:

Stealing other racers' spells? If you bump into them, you can grab their magic. You can even pass off the "Death" status this way.

OPM psychic sez:

Very simple and very, very cute, Chocobo Racing is an acquired taste. Die-hard Final Fantasy fans and younger fans should enjoy it.

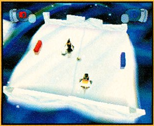
Demo Disc

If a picture is worth a thousand words, a playable demo is worth a million

Pong

Players	1-4	**Developer**	Supersonic Soft.
Availability	October	**Publisher**	Hasbro Interactive
Analog Compatible	Yes	**Genre**	Misc.

✕	Use Power-Up
○	Not Used
□	Not Used
△	Go Back/Cancel
L1	Not Used
L2	Not Used
R1	Choose Power-Up
R2	Not Used



Skating...skating...
Don't let the tranquility in this pic fool you. Pong is full of fast ricochet action much like a good game of ping-pong...sans the crushed balls.

What is it?

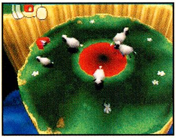
It's Pong, only it's, like, 3D. But this remix is more than just a pretty face; it also features new levels and new modes of play.

What to expect in the final version:

20 unique stages; two to four players; 60 fps 3D graphics with dramatic camera angles; a plethora of power-ups.

Our advice:

Avoid missing ball for high score. It worked back then, and it's still good advice today. Nevertheless, here are some tips for the new stages:



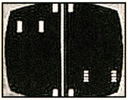
In the ice stage, hitting the penguins causes them to create another ball. Two or more balls can be on the field at once, letting nimble-fingered players gain a quick advantage over their opponents. Pick up power-ups by hitting your ball into them. When the ball is on your opponent's half of the field, use the power-up to elevate your half. Now your opponent is forced to play half-court Pong while you laugh at them from on high. Ha-ha!

In the soccer stage, concentrate on hitting the ball into your opponent's goal. Each of you has two paddles on your "team," so make sure the pair is working with, and not against, each other. Giving the ball "spin" on the return can help you bypass the defenders. Gooooooooooal!

OPM psychic sez:

It may be called "Pong," but there are many new twists. It keeps the original's simplicity while adding enough new gameplay features to make it interesting.

Such Humble Beginnings

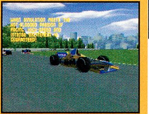


Pong is widely heralded as the title that brought videogaming to the masses. There's something downright Zen-like about its two paddles, ball and instructional koan: "Avoid missing ball for high score." Popular legend holds that the first installed Pong machine, installed in Andy Capp's bar in Sunnyvale, CA, broke down in just under a week. When the repairman opened the machine, the problem was obvious: the case was simply overflowing with quarters.

Monaco Grand Prix Racing Sim. 2

Players	1-4	**Developer**	UbiSoft
Availability	September	**Publisher**	UbiSoft
Analog Compatible	Yes	**Genre**	Racing

✕	Acceleration
○	Back
□	Brake
△	Change 2D display
L1	Not used
L2	Change camera view
R1	Not Used
R2	Rear view



Start your engines!
It's few and far between that we see good F1 sims on the PlayStation. This racer could fit the bill.

What is it?

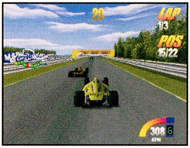
UbiSoft brings their F1 racing title to the PlayStation.

What to expect in the final:

Realistic physics engine; Arcade and Simulation modes; Single race, Championship, Time Attack and Multiplayer modes; 16 international courses; 22 simultaneous cars on track; scalable levels of racing complexity.

Our advice:

This is real F1 racing, so even the "Arcade" mode is less forgiving than most. Grass slows you down immensely, while the sandtraps bring your car to a dead stop. Fortunately, the Arcade mode physics model is forgiving enough to let you bump into other cars. So knock those bastards off the road! Ahem. Stick to the road and don't take the hairpin curves too quickly and you should do fine.



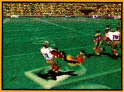
LAP
1/3
POS
19/22
281 5

OPM psychic sez:

There hasn't been a good F1 racing game on the PlayStation in a while, but UbiSoft's game looks to fit the bill. Hopefully, the full feature monty won't disappoint.

NFL GameDay 2000

Players	1-8	**Developer**	989 Sports
Availability	Fall	**Publisher**	989 Studios
Analog Controller	Yes	**Genre**	Sports



What is it? Sony's latest GameDay title.
Why should I care? 1,240 plays, 200 motion-captured animations, commentary from Dick Enberg (play-by-play) and Phil Simms (color commentary), and all the players, teams and stadiums, except for your team, cause they suck.

***OPM* video critic sez:** Didn't I see this video last issue? Well, it's even better after a second viewing! A true classic of football game propaganda, and one no *OPM* demo disc should be without. Two thumbs up, way the heck up!

NCAA Gamebreaker 2000

Players	1-8	**Developer**	989 Sports
Availability	Now	**Publisher**	989 Studios
Analog Controller	Yes	**Genre**	Sports

What is it? Not just football—NCAA football!
Why should I care? After last year's surprisingly good NCAA title, the Gamebreaker series has been one to watch. This year's incarnation has the standard graphical and engine tweaks, but adds 114 Division 1-A teams and 50 classic teams to choose from. Keith Johnson returns with the play-by-play, while UCLA coach Bob Toledo provides plays and strategy.

***OPM* video critic sez:** College football seems to have more electricity and authenticity than its big NFL brother. Could this "vibe" transfer into a better gaming experience? We'll see. Thumbs up.

Vigilante 8: Second Offense

Players	1-4	**Developer**	Luxoflux
Availability	October	**Publisher**	Activision
Analog Controller	Yes	**Genre**	Action

What is it? The follow up to the king of vehicular combat.
Why should I care? One- and two-player quest, brawl, desperado and team modes; new cars, characters, environments; revamped graphical engine; hovercars; supafly time-travelin' '70s funk story line.

***OPM* video critic sez:** Post Twisted Metal 2, Vigilante 8 is the only vehicular combat game that matters. The sequel adds the requisite graphical and gameplay improvements, but stirs in a retro-future time-travel plot. Mad Max would dig it, and so do I. Thumbs up.

Thrasher

Players	1-2	**Developer**	Z-Axis Ltd.R
Availability	Early 2000	**Publishe**	Rockstar Games
Analog Controller	Yes	**Genre**	Sports

What is it? A skateboarding simulation that focuses on realistic tricks and street skating.
Why should I care? 16 city environments; two-minute trick runs; frenzied cop chases; licensed boards and threads; "horse" mode; 3-of-5 trick mode; best crash mode.

***OPM* video critic sez:** Between Thrasher and Tony Hawk's Pro Skater, PlayStation fans are going to be in skateboarding nirvana. In many ways, the game sounds like the skateboarding classic 720, and a contest to perform the most heinous crash sounds great. Thumbs up.

Toy Story 2

Players	1	**Developer**	Disney Int.
Availability	December	**Publisher**	Activision.
Analog Controller	Yes	**Genre**	Platform

What is it? Disney's new platformer title has a tie-in movie in theatres this fall. Buzz Lightyear to the rescue!
Why should I care? Seven unique worlds; swinging, jumping, bouncing; fully 3D environments filled with enemies and puzzles

***OPM* video critic sez:** Disney games are a mixed bag—*A Bug's Life* was pretty poor, but *Tarzan* was surprisingly enjoyable. Toy Story 2 looks to expertly capture the film's look and feel; with any luck, it will play well, too. Thumbs up.

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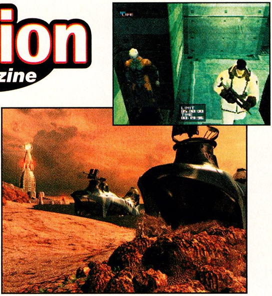
Next Month

A look ahead at our next issue

October 1999

Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine

On sale September 14



For the past few months we've been showing you tons of cool games that seemed to be right around the corner. Next month's issue will tell you just how some of this year's biggest games have turned out. Look for critiques of Final Fantasy VIII, Metal Gear: VR Missions (which is also on the disc!), Madden NFL 2000, NFL GameDay 2000 and Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver. Not only will we rate Final Fantasy VIII, we'll also provide a detailed strategy guide to get you through this mammoth RPG. We'll also shed some light on plenty of new games like NBA Showtime and more.

Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine
Demo Disc
SONY

Check Out Our Next Demo Disc!

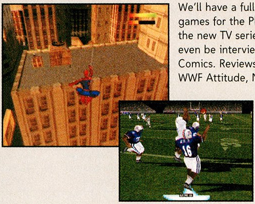
PLAYABLES: METAL GEAR SOLID: VR MISSIONS, NFL XTREME 2, OMEGA BOOST, JET MOTO 3, BUGS BUNNY: LOST IN TIME, WIPEOUT 3, PAC-MAN WORLD, TOY STORY 2, CHAMPIONSHIP MOTOCROSS FEATURING RICKY CARMICHAEL

NON-PLAYABLES: NHL FACE OFF 2000, FIGHTING FORCE, RUGRATS 2, HOT WHEELS, COUNTDOWN VAMPIRES, WU-TANG

Editorial content subject to change

ELECTRONIC GAMING MONTHLY™

On Sale September 7

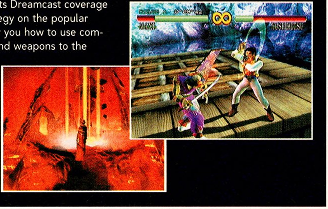


We'll have a full preview of the Spider-Man games for the PlayStation and N64 plus info on the new TV series and the comic book, and we'll even be interviewing people from Marvel Comics. Reviews include Final Fantasy VIII, WWF Attitude, NCAA Football 2000 plus all the Dreamcast launch games. We'll take a look at Madden NFL 2000 for the N64 and we'll wrap up the issue with tons of tricks for the DC launch lineup and Official GameShark codes.

EXPERT GAMER™

On sale September 21

Expert Gamer kicks off its Dreamcast coverage next month with a strategy on the popular Soul Calibur. We'll show you how to use combos, counters, juggles and weapons to the fullest advantage. Our October issue will also have the low-down on Final Fantasy VIII. We'll reveal all Guardian Force locations and provide a comprehensive, spoiler-free walk-through of the game.



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Issue #1–$15

October 1997

Ghost in the Shell, Final Fantasy VII Strategy

Demo Disc includes: playables: Intelligent Qube, PaRappa the Rapper, Ace Combat 2, Fighting Force non-playables: Tomb Raider II, NFL GameDay 98

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Issue #2–$10

November 1997

PaRappa the Rapper Bushido Blade Strategy

Demo Disc includes: playables: Crash Bandicoot 2, Croc, Armored Core, Madden NFL 98, Cool Boarders 2, Colony Wars non-playables: NHL FaceOff 98, Ghost in the Shell

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Issue #3– $10

December 1997

Cool Boarders Strategy

Demo Disc includes: playables: Bushido Blade, Vs., Star Wars: Masters of Teräs Kâsi, Jet Moto 2, Cardinal SYN, Ghost in the Shell, Moto Racer, Test Drive 4 non-playable: One

☐

Issue #4–$10

January 1998

Resident Evil 2 Feature Tomb Raider II Strategy

Demo Disc includes: playables: NFL GameDay 98, CART World Series, Frogger non-playables: Spawn, Final Fantasy Tactics, Pandemonium 2, Gex 2

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Issue #5–$10

February 1998

Dead or Alive Feature 1997 *OPM* Editors' Awards

Demo Disc includes: playables: NCAA GameBreaker 98, Tomb Raider II, Command & Conquer: Red Alert, Crime Killer non-playables: Pitfall 3D, Resident Evil 2, Vigilante 8, Monster Rancher

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Issue #6–$7.99

March 1998

Demo Disc Only!

playables: Bloody Roar, Monster Rancher, Shipwreckers non-playables: Alundra, NBA Shoot Out 98, Saga Frontier, Mega Man Neo

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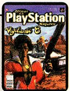
Issue #7–$10

April 1998

10 Overlooked PS Picks Resident Evil 2 Strategy

Demo Disc includes: playables: Hot Shots Golf, Pitfall 3D, WCW Nitro, ONE non-playables: Blasto, The Granstream Saga



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Issue #8–$10

May 1998

10 Greatest PS Fighters Tekken 3 Strategy

Demo Disc includes: playables: Einhänder, Gex: Enter the Gecko, Klonoa non-playables: Dead or Alive, Gran Turismo

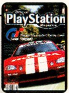
☐

Issue #9–$15

June 1998

Metal Gear Solid Preview Gran Turismo Review

Demo Disc includes: playables: Cardinal SYN, Vigilante 8, Forsaken, N2O, TOCA, Dead or Alive non-playables: Tomba, Jersey Devil



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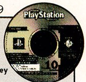
Issue #10–$7.99

July 1998

Demo Disc Only!

playables: Gran Turismo, Tomba!, The Granstream Saga, Jersey Devil, NBA Shoot Out, Blasto, Speed Racer non-playables: NFL Xtreme, MLB 99, Tekken 3



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Issue #11–$15

August 1998

Metal Gear Solid Vigilante 8 Strategy

Demo Disc includes: playables: Tekken 3, Turbo Prop Racing non-playables: Duke Nukem: Time to Kill, Lunar: Silver Star Story, Ninja: Shadow of Darkness, Metal Gear Solid

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Issue #12–$10

September 1998

PlayStation's Birthday Elemental Gearbolt Strategy

Demo Disc includes: playables: Spyro the Dragon, Duke Nukem: Time to Kill, WWF War Zone, The Unholy War, S.C.A.R.S. non-playables: Metal Gear Solid, Rival Schools, Test Drive 5

☐

Volume 2
Issue 1–$10

October 1998

Spyro the Dragon Strategy

Demo Disc includes: playables: Metal Gear Solid, Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver, Test Drive 5, Devil Dice, Brunswick Bowling, Ninja, NFL Xtreme, Cool Boarders 3 non-playables: Parasite Eve, Rival Schools, NFL GameDay 99

☐

Volume 2
Issue 2–$15

November 1998

Tomb Raider III Metal Gear Solid Strategy

Demo Disc includes: playables: MediEvil, WarGames: Defcon 1, G. Darius, Dragon Seeds, Colony Wars: Vengeance, Future Cop L.A.P.D., non-playables: Crash Bandicoot: WARPED, Abe's Exoddus, Brave Fencer Musashi, Rugrats, T'ai Fu, Tenchu, You Don't Know Jack

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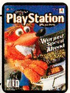
Volume 2
Issue 3–$10

December 1998

Metal Gear Solid Crash Bandicoot: WARPED Strategy

Demo Disc includes: playables: Tomb Raider III, Crash Bandicoot: WARPED, Bomberman World, A Bug's Life, Running Wild, Invasion From Beyond, Kagero: Deception II, Metal Gear Solid, Gran Turismo, non-playables: Silent Hill, Knockout Kings, Big Air



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Volume 2
Issue 4–$10

January 1999

Gex Deep Cover Gecko Tomb Raider III Strategy

Demo Disc includes: playables: Silent Hill, Moto Racer 2, Brave Fencer Musashi, Apocalypse, T'ai Fu non-playables: Rugrats, Test Drive: Off–Road 2

☐

Volume 2
Issue 6–$10

March 1999

PlayStation Dictionary Syphon Filter Strategy

Demo Disc includes: playables: Syphon Filter, Bust A Groove, Shadow Madness, Fisherman's Bait, Akuji the Heartless, No One Can Stop Mr. Domino, Street Sk8er non-playables: NCAA Final Four '99, Guardian's Crusade

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Volume 2
Issue 7–$10

April 1999

The Year of the RPG Silent Hill Strategy

Demo Disc includes: playables: R4: Ridge Racer Type 4, WCW/nWo Thunder, Rollcage, Warzone 2100, Rugrats: Search for Reptar non-playables: Legend of Legaia

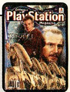
☐

Volume 2
Issue 8–$10

May 1999

Star Wars: Episode I–The Phantom Menace Feature Legend of Legaia Strategy

Demo Disc includes: playables: Ehrgeiz, Gex 3: Deep Cover Gecko, Legend of Legaia, Contender non-playables: 3Xtreme, Centipede, Driver, G Police 2, Gauntlet Legends



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Volume 2
Issue 9–$10

June 1999

Resident Evil 3 Nemesis Gex 3: Deep Cover Gecko Strategy

Demo Disc includes: playables: Oddworld: Abe's Exoddus, NFL Blitz, Bust-a-Move 4, R4: Ridge Racer Type 4, Elmo's Letter Adventure non-playables: Star Ocean: The Second Story, Bloody Roar 2, MLB 2000, Jade Cocoon, Tony Hawk's Pro Skater

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Volume 2
Issue 10–$10

July 1999

25 Games You Must Play Street Fighter Alpha 3 Strategy

Demo Disc includes: playables: Ape Escape, MLB 2000, The Next Tetris, Tony Hawk's Pro Skater, Interplay Sports Baseball 2000, Croc 2, Soul of the Samuri, Bloody Roar 2 non-playables: Jet Moto 3, Xena: Warrior Princess, Macross VFX 2, Street Fighter Alpha 3

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Volume 2
Issue 11–$10

August 1999

Tarzan Lord of the Console Ape Escape Strategy

Demo Disc includes: playables: Final Fantasy VIII, 3 Xtreme, Tiny Tank, Jade Cocoon, Macross VF-X 2, You Don't Know Jack, Centipede, Ultimate 8-Ball non-playables: Shao Lin, NFL GameDay 2000, NFL Xtreme 2

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Official Contest and Sweepstakes Rules

TOP 10 MOST WANTED SWEEPSTAKES

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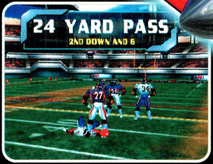

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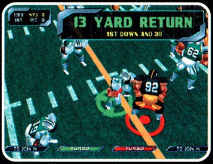

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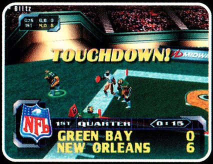

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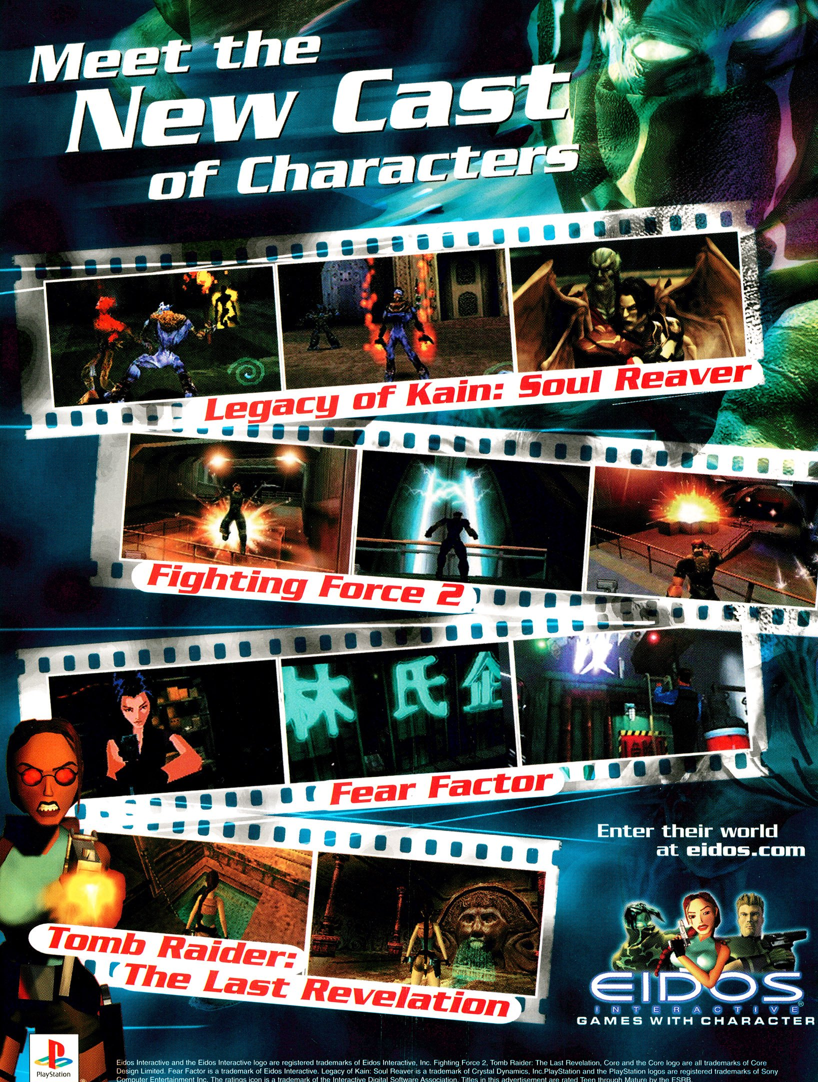
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